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A/N

This story ignores the third arc. Mostly because I haven't read it yet but also because some of of the plot twists don't work if the third arc is cannon in this universe. In other words, this story picks up about a year after the epilogue of Darkness of dragons.

Meerkat

Sunny walked down the long alleyway behind the main area of Possibility. It was a secret shortcut her mother had told her about to get to the part of the Marketplace that sold food. Sunny knew Thorn thought that would be a good thing to know for her vacation to Possibility, but Thorn has forgotten a minor detail: Sunny had never been to Possibility, and so the back alleyway was the only route she knew to the market.

Sunny was still deep in her thinking when a dragon suddenly tackled her. It was clearly a Sandwing, but it's face was covered by a Seawing mask. Sunny screamed, and the dragon quickly shoved her face into the sand, but Sunny's effort had been enough. A pale yellow head popped around the corner of the alley and started when it saw Sunny being attacked.

"Stop! You are under arrest, by order of the Enclave!" The new dragon roared. He surged forwards and knocked away Sunny's attacker before the dragon could even spread it's wings to escape. Sunny leapt up the second the crushing weight was lifted from her, and flapped up to the top of the nearest building. She cleaned the sand off her face, while watching the two dragons suspiciously in case whichever won the fight went back to attack her.

Soon enough, the dragon who had rescued her had knocked out the attacker. Then, he made a series of odd, high pitched sounds that made Sunny want to cover her ears. Quickly, a few more dragons appeared around the corner. Sunny shrank back, shimmying under a small overhang where she couldn't be seen. She did not yet know if this "Enclave" was on her side or not. She supposed talking would clear some things up, but Thorn had told her not to risk anything when badly outnumbered. She leaned forward and pricked her ears as the dragon began calling orders.

"Sandstorm, Venom. Lock up this dragon, under charges of attacking Princess Sunny. Desert, inform the rest of the Enclave, and Queen Thorn that the Princess is here, and has been attacked.

I'll stay here to locate Princess Sunny." He said, pointing at each dragon with his tail as he said their names. Venom sat by the attacker's head, and carefully removed the Seawing mask, while Sandstorm walked up to the dragon who had been giving orders.

"Permission to go get something to restrain the prisoner Chief Meerkat?"

"Permission granted. But, Sandstorm, you don't need to ask permission. And just call me Meerkat. I'm not ranked that much higher than you." Meerkat replied, covering his face with his talons with an exasperated sigh.

Meerkat. So that's his name. He doesn't seem *like he would attack me. I'll wait a minute, until he's alone. I can outfly* one *dragon. Right?* Sunny thought. *And he is taking away the dragon who attacked me... hmm*

The last of Meerkat's companions exited the alley, and Meerkat immediately flew up to Sunny's hiding space.

"You can come out now Princess Sunny." He said. Sunny sheepishly crawled out from under the overhang and faced him. Meerkat was stunningly handsome up close, Sunny noticed, then immediately shook herself. *Why would I be thinking about something like that?* She wondered with disgust.

"H- how did you know who I was?" She stammered nervously, hoping he wouldn't say "because Queen Thorn told me to follow you secretly since you told her you didn't want a guard." or something like that. It would be frustrating to have her mother suddenly turn into Deathbringer 2.0 and order a secret personal guard follow her everywhere.

"Oh, well ummm..." Meerkat trailed off, gesturing at her barbless tail and golden scales "You don't exactly blend in with the crowd." he explained, clearly trying not to say something that she might take the wrong way. Sunny looked down to where he was pointing.

"Oh. Ok then. Thanks for saving me!" Sunny chirped, her usual cheerful attitude back. Meerkat grinned at her sudden mood swing.

Then he looked around, and with a clear effort, managed to plaster on his serious business face again.

"So... do you mind if I walk you home? I mean, you've already been attacked once today, I wouldn't want it to happen again..." Meerkat asked awkwardly, but in a way that made Sunny think he would follow her home whatever her answer was.

"Sure, that's ok." Sunny replied honestly. *This way I can see him for longer before he has to go...* Sunny put a talon to her head. *I umm I mean this way I can interrogate him about what the Enclave is. Yeah... that's why I want him to come with me...*

Sunny was snapped out of her thoughts by what sounded like a bird call, but was actually Meerkat, beckoning her with his tail.

The Enclave

Meerkat and Sunny swooped down, and walked in silence for a few minutes before Sunny began talking.

"Hey Meerkat?" Sunny started

Meerkat looked up. "Yeah?"

"What is the Enclave?" Meerkat started at the question

"Shouldn't you know Princess? We *were* organised by your mother, Queen Thorn."

"Really? She never mentioned you, but then again, I am always at Jade Mountain Academy, trying to crack down on the "More learning, less skipping class to go fight monsters from beyond" rule."

Meerkat laughed. "Then I guess we have more in common then I thought. The Enclave is pretty much a group for enforcing Queen Thorn's laws and keeping the peace."

"Hmm. Sounds like my job, except that you get to lock up dragons if they don't follow the rules. The only place I can lock my students is detention with Starflight." Sunny joked. Meerkat burst out laughing and they had to stop for a little while until he caught his breath.

"I can just imagine you grabbing a misbehaving student by the ear, dragging them into the library and locking the door." Meerkat chuckled

Sunny snorted with amusement. "I wish. Some of those SkyWings wouldn't even go to detention after they tried to drown a Seawing because they thought it was funny. I actually had to get Tsunami to herd them into the library, and Peril to stand outside the door and keep them in because Starflight wouldn't let her near his scrolls. She's pretty much banned from going near scrolls after she burnt down one of Starflight's personal bookshelves."

"Wow, Jade Mountain sounds exciting." Meerkat commented

"Don't worry, it's not that chaotic every day. Just every other day!" Sunny joked with a false peppy tone that made her sound like a one year old dragonet. Meerkat laughed again, and unconsciously put his wing over Sunny's shoulder as they walked up the path to the cottage she, Moon and Qibli were sharing. Meerkat dropped her off at the front door, which Qibli opened. His eye ridges raised slightly when he saw how Meerkat had his wing wrapped protectively around Sunny. Meerkat quickly realised what he was doing, and pulled his wing back to his side. Sunny shivered slightly at the air touching her back, cold in comparison to Meerkat's warm wing.

"Bye Sunny!" Qibli gave Meerkat a look. "Oh, um sorry, I mean goodbye Princess Sunny." Meerkat corrected, turning away with embarrassment.

"Wait!" Sunny called. Meerkat turned his head. "Can you come back and tell me when you find out who attacked me?" Qibli flared his wings in shock.

"Someone attacked you?!" He asked, yanking Sunny back inside.

"Oh, umm ok..." Meerkat trailed off, as Qibli closed and locked the door behind him. Meerkat sighed and walked off.

Moonbli

"Ok. WHAT HAPPENED OUT THERE!?" Qibli shouted as soon as he closed the door. Moonwatcher walked up to him and brushed his wingtip with hers.

"Calm down Qibli. You're starting to sound like Winter." She said softly. Qibli looked at her with a mixture of surprise and concern, as he always did when she told him off in her gentle way. He sighed.

"Sorry Moon. And Sunny, sorry if I was a bit... loud. But really, I need to know what happened."

Sunny sighed. "Well, it all started when I went to go buy some food-shit that's what I forgot!" Sunny exclaimed, facetaloning.

"I think you've been spending too much time around Thorn" Qibli snickered. "But go on."

"As I was saying...."

.....

".... and then Meerkat walked me home so I wouldn't get attacked again." Sunny finished. Qibli was pacing and holding his head in his talons.

"Ugh!" he groaned. "Thorn is gonna kill me! She's going to cut my head off and feed it to the vultures! I had *one* job and I failed! I'm dead." Qibli curled up in the corner and covered his head with his wings.

Sunny sidled over to Moon. "I think I broke him..." She whispered. Moon nodded, and then doubled over in pain clutching her head. Sunny patted her on the back until she regained her composure. "Vision?"

"Nope, for once. It's a- well it's Qibli." Seeing Sunny's confused look, she continued. "To be specific, it's Qibli thinking about what your

mother is going to do to him when she finds out that you were attacked. Or rather, how exactly she's going to kill him."

Qibli reached up onto the table and grabbed his Skyfire. Moon smiled at him gratefully and walked over.

"It's ok Qibbs, you're not going to die by angry Queen Thorn, I promise. Take it from a prophet." Moon leaned down and kissed him on the cheek.

"Yeah Qibli, I'm not hurt or anything. I just have some sand up my snout." Sunny assured him.

"You really don't think Thorn will kill me, kick me out of the Sand kingdom or punish me?" Qibli asked tentatively.

Sunny rolled her eyes. "You're practically my brother Qibli, she's not going to banish you for not being in the right place at the right time."

Qibli has a rueful expression on his face. "I need a nap" he groaned, rubbing his head. Moon helped him up, and they walked into their room. A moment later, Moon walked out again, glancing over her shoulder at the door before turning and closing it.

"I need to tell you something." She said quickly.

"What is it Moon?"

"Not here." Moon said, using her wing to guide Sunny out the door.

The sat in the garden and Moon looked around nervously, as if dragons were hiding in the trees. She leaned closer to Sunny and spread her wings as if to shield them. Sunny looked anxiously into Moon's face. Moon bit her lip and whispered in Sunny's ear.

"I'm going to have Qibli's egg." Sunny started back in surprise.

"Wha- uh, ummm... WOW just WOW that's all I can think right now!" Sunny stuttered loudly. Moon frantically shushed her, glancing warily at the house.

"I haven't told Qibli yet..." She admitted. Sunny hugged her gently, patting her on the back.

"Don't worry, I'm sure he'll be ecstatic to have... *dragonets*." Sunny reassured, whispering the last part. Moonwatcher sighed. "And you've gotta tell him!" Sunny scolded.

"Tell who, what?" Moon froze at the sound of Qibli's voice. "Moon? What's going on out here?"

"Oh crap." Moon swore, backing away. Qibli took a step forward and Moon twisted and leapt into the air, flapping away frantically. Sunny sighed and shot into the the sky after her. Qibli sat down with a thud on his front porch, shaking his head in confusion.

Meanwhile up in the sky, Sunny was shouting to Moon.

"SLOW DOWN! HE HAS TO FIND OUT SOMETIME, WHY NOT NOW? C'MON MOONWATCHER, BE CARFUL! FLYING THIS FAST CAN'T BE GOOD FOR YOU! OR FOR THE YOU-KNOW-WHAT."

Moon turned back to the little Sandwing and appeared to be about to say something, when she suddenly doubled over in pain and fell out of the sky, screaming.

The prophecy

Qibli caught her. Moon thought she was dead, but before she hit the ground, she fell onto all to familiar warm scales. At first she tried to shy away from Qibli, but her headache stopped her and she pressed her forehead against his chest. He stroked her neck gently and made soothing sounds as her eyes glazed over.

From up in the sky, Sunny could see that Qibli was thinking a mile a minute, trying to figure out what was happening to his girlfriend. Sunny landed, and rushed up to Moon's side.

"Three moons, what *happened* to her?" Sunny asked anxiously, staring up at Qibli's concerned face.

"Must be a vision." He concluded after a moment. Moon gasped at the word "Vision" and her eyes glazed over, and she spoke in the voice she had used years ago, when delivering the Jade Mountain prophecy.

The Vision shall come, and with her the storm of white from the past. It is not her who shall cause the trouble however, but the long set enchantments left by her brother. In two generations this spell will be at full, but for now watch out, past terrors come still.

First the ghost of insanity, forever trapped in snow, shall be released to do it's haunting. The wings of ice shall be trapped, in one way or another. And outside its borders, the ghost of ice will forever be taunting.

Qibli and Sunny exchanged a glance, filled with worry and fear. They edged a little closer together, and peered at Moon's face. Her eyes snapped back open suddenly, then she closed them with a groan after taking in her surroundings.

"Three moons! That was another *prophecy*, wasn't it?" Moon sighed

"Unfortunately, I believe so." Qibli unhappily.

"I sure hope- Ow, ow, ow. Sunny, touch Qibli's skyfire please." Sunny touched it with an apologetic look on her face. Before she touched it though, she made sure to send a *very* clear thought to Moon. *You NEED to tell him. He will know by the end of the day, one way or another.* Moon sighed, and looked pleadingly at Sunny, who glared back.

"Qibli....." Moon tried. Sunny have her an encouraging grin and waved her talons for Moon to go on. " Qibli... ummm. My prophecy? You know the part about "The Vision will come?" I think I know what it's about." Sunny facetaloned, but Qibli nodded for Moon to continue. "Well, ahh- umm, Vision is a dragon. A dragonet to be precise. Our dragonet." Qibli put Moon down gently and sat back on the sand with a thump. Moon shuffled her feet and glanced sideways at him.

"Uhhh.... so umm, the prophecy will only come true if she's born right? So if we don't have dragonets the "Wings of ice" won't be "trapped" right?"

Moon shifted her legs sheepishly. "Umm, well, it's kinda too late for that..." She said awkwardly. Qibli's eyes widened, and from his face, Moon could guess exactly what he was thinking.

Qibli practically shook with a mix of excitement, amazement and terror. "I'm going to be a father? Me? *Me?*" His mouth opened and closed, at a loss for words. Then he jumped forward and hugged Moon close. He pulled her even closer and kissed her passionately, twining his tail around hers.

Of course Sunny just had to remind them she was there by squeaking in excitement and whisper shouting. "I ship it!!!" Moon glanced at her old friend, laughed and then went back to kissing Qibli.

"I'll just leave you two alone..." Sunny whispered, backing into the small grove of trees nearby.

The visit

Sunny looked up after a knock on the door startled her from her work. It had been a few days since Moon's prophecy, and Qibli had decided Thorn needed to know as soon as possible. That is why Sunny was now packing to go back home to the stronghold. She quickly went to open the door, and nearly squealed with happiness at the dragon she saw on the patio. Meerkat. She had been wondering if he would come see her again before it was time to leave. Hoping he would, but fearing he wouldn't. Sunny practically leapt down to give him a hug, which clearly startled the living daylights out of him, but she hardly cared.

"Meerkat! I missed you! I'm just about to go back to the stronghold and I was really hoping that you would come back before I left, but now you have so there's nothing to worry about and oh moons I'm starting to sound like Kinkajou aren't I." Meerkat looked extremely startled and Sunny took a step back, suddenly developing an intense fascination with her talons.

"O-oh ummm hi Sunny, I was just coming to tell you that I'm going to the stronghold too. Well that and I figured out who attacked you." Meerkat stammered, clearly not expecting this reaction from the Sandwing Princess.

A grin slowly spread across Sunny's face. She had been sadly thinking she might never see Meerkat again after she went to the stronghold. After this trip she doubted her mother would even let her teach again the next school year. *But if Meerkat is coming with me... that way nobody can keep us apart... and umm he could protect me so Qibli doesn't have to leave Moon behind, so soon before their egg is laid and all.*

"Sunny? Pyrrhia to Sunny?" Meerkat said, waving a talon in front of her face. "I said: Do you think I could come with you to keep you safe?" Sunny grinned and gazed into his eyes.

"Hell yes! I was *just* thinking exactly that!" She shouted with

excitement.

"Exactly what?" Qibli's voice called from the house. Sunny turned around and saw him standing in the doorway yawning.

"Oh hey Qibli! Ok, so Meerkat just had the *best idea ever*. I know you don't want to leave Moon here, since she's so close to laying her egg and all, but I need a guard, right? So anyways, Meerkat needs to see my mother too, so what if he escorts me so you can stay with Moon?" Sunny explained in a rush. Qibli gave Meerkat a slightly concerned look.

"Meerkat, you sure you up to it?" He asked in a skeptical tone. Sunny glared and opened her mouth, but Meerkat brushed her wingtip with his in a silent
gesture of "Calm down, I got it." Then he walked up to Qibli, and in a friendly voice said:

"It's ok Qibli. I got it, and besides, I've already saved her once, no reason I can't do it again. Besides, she's right about your egg, it would be hard to help Moon if you were miles away when she laid it." Meerkat insisted. Qibli tried to look unsure, but it was clear in his eyes that he was convinced.

"Fine, but she better be well protected. You leave tomorrow." Meerkat nodded and bowed to Sunny.

"I will not let you down, my Princess." He promised, then jumped into the sky from his bow, showing off for the other two Sandwings, and soared into the sky.

"Well you picked a good one." Qibli said, nudging Sunny with a teasing smirk. Her face turned deep orangey red with embarrassment and she looked away, shifting her wings. "Not denying it." Qibli noted. Sunny shoved him, her ears pinned in embarrassment.

"Shut up Qibli."

The flight

"Bye!" Moon called from her place on the patio. Qibli waved with one wing, wrapping the other protectively around Moon. He had proposed to her the night before, and Sunny had made them promise to let her plan the wedding. Now she flapped her wings, flying backwards waving goodbye to her friends. She was already thinking about what colour of "Just married!" flag she should use. She flipped around, carful to not drop anything from the bag she was carrying. She had been supposed to carry two, while Meerkat carried another two, but he insisted on holding as many bags as possible for his "future Queen." Thinking about it, she almost twined her tail around his, before she remembered that the only place he'd asked her to be his girlfriend was in her fantasies. As the two Sandwings soared off into the desert, Sunny thought only about the dragon flying next to her. His warm, perfectly smooth scales. The nearly white colour of his crest. The way his black eyes reflected the morning light so they looked more warm brown then coal black. The longer she stared at him, the more she thought that she had never seen a more perfect dragon. She was so distracted by the Sandwing beside her that she never noticed the Sandwing above her. Meerkat did though.

"Sunny! Get down!" He shouted, lunging at the space above her head. Sunny ducked and partially closed her wings mid flight, a trick she had learned from her mother for dropping out of the sky quickly while still in control. She landed in a barrel roll, another flight trick from Thorn, and looked up. Meerkat was grappling with another Sandwing, this one wearing a SkyWing mask. It smacked Meerkat with it's wing, then roared a bolt of flame at him. Sunny realised with horror that Meerkat was still trying to carry her bags while fighting the masked Sandwing. She beat her wings and soared up to him, knocking the Sandwing from the sky before grabbing the bags from his talons and throwing them down, hissing.

"There's nothing fragile in there, you idiot!"

"Ops..." Meerkat said sheepishly. Sunny facetaloned. Suddenly the Sandwing shot a long stream of fire in between them, and then tackled Sunny. She kicked out at its face as they were falling, but all that did was loosen his SkyWing mask. A few feet from the ground the falling stopped abruptly, and the dragon above Sunny began screaming in agony. It's talons sank deeper into her arms and the dragons dark red blood splattered around her. They were lowered gently to the ground. Sunny shrank into a ball and then yelped as the dragon's talons were pulled out of her arms. There was a loud thump, and then the masked dragon's weight was gone from her body. Meerkat landed in front of her, stained with blood and with a traumatised look on his face. Up in the sky, a dragon in a black Nightwing mask soared away, holding the four bags Sunny had brought.

"There goes lunch..." she whispered before passing out.

The stronghold

Sunny woke to a feather working it's way up her snout. She sneezed to get rid of it, and saw Meerkat look up from where he was washing the blood off his wingtips. *He must have carried me here after I passed out...* Sunny thought groggily. She took a closer look at the feather that had been bothering her, and saw that it was a buzzard feather. There were a few dozen more under her head, as if Meerkat had tried to make her a pillow. A few dragon lengths away, there were two buzzards roasting over a fire, plucked clean of all the feathers. Sunny rubbed her eyes and sat up onto her haunches. Meerkat pulled one of the buzzards off the stick it was impaled on and handed it to Sunny.

"Lunch?" He asked. Sunny took it with a nod and wolfed it down quickly.

"Thanks. I was hungry." She said, licking her lips. They stared at each other for just a little too long before Meerkat jumped up and looked around, as if he expected someone had been watching them.

"Umm, we should get going..." Meerkat suggested, helping Sunny to her feet.

"Oh.. yeah..." She replied, still staring at him. He picked up the buzzard that was still on the stick, and ate it quickly while Sunny washed off in the oasis.

...

The stronghold was in sight soon after the two Sandwings took off. When they reached it, they had to check in formally to go see the Queen. Thorn was happy to see Sunny, but not very happy to find out about her being attacked twice in one visit.

"I am *never* letting you go to Possibility without an Outclaw again, and that's *final*!"

"But mother....." Sunny protested "I'm fine, see?" She spread her wings so Thorn could examine her for cuts, scabs or missing scales.

"Hmph." Was all the Sandwing Queen said.

"And besides, Meerkat was there to save me." Sunny reassured her. Queen Thorn looked up from her examination of Sunny's left wing.

"Meerkat? Like the Meerkat in charge of the Enclave?" Thorn asked. "Is he here? I need to talk to him about a particular gang he reported causing trouble a few months back."

"Yeah, he's here. Waiting outside actually. He said he knows who attacked me." Thorns eyes widened.

"SMOULDER!" She called. Smoulder peeked his head around the door.

"Yes your majesty?" He asked. Thorn rolled her eyes at him.

"Go get Meerkat in here. He's the very pale yellow Sandwing. And Smoulder, we are *married.* You don't need to call me your majesty." Thorn sighed, rolling her eyes again. Smoulder nodded and ducked out of the throne room. A moment later, Meerkat rushed into the throne room and bowed deeply to Thorn and Sunny.

"Meerkat. Princess Sunny has told me you know who attacked her." The Queen's voice rose to a dangerous tone at the word "attacked"

"Yes your majesty, she was one of the gang I told you about a few months ago, who were disturbing the peace."

"So they've gotten bolder." Thorn observed stiffly. *What are they talking about? What gang?* Sunny wondered.

"What gang?" She asked. "I never heard of any gangs. Not since the Talons of Power anyways. What's going on?"

"Sweetheart, your too young to be involved in this..." Thorn tried.

"No I'm not! I'm almost as old as Meerkat! And I've stopped a war, I'm not too young to know anything!" Sunny insisted.

Thorn paused. "Meerkat, you tell her. You know more about it than I do."

The Masked

Meerkat sighed. "Well you see Sunny-" he started, then cut himself off when the Queen gave him and Sunny a look. She was clearly thinking: *When did these two get on a first name basis! Sunny told me they met not three days ago!* Meerkat corrected himself quickly. "Sorry, I mean Princess Sunny. Anyways, the gang that attacked you is called The Masked. They are an all Sandwing terrorist group, who wear masks to try and cause trouble with other tribes. They also like to take dragons prisoner and hold them for ransom. Or just so they can torture the prisoners for information or to get their anger out. If they had captured you, I doubt you would get out of there without permanent injuries. They hate you and all the Dragonets of Destiny for ending the war, because nobody questioned a dragon going missing mid battle, and a queen would pay a lot for her commanding officer back. That and they could sell prisoners to Queen Scarlet in exchange for treasure or protection. They were the second most powerful force in the Scorpion den until the war ended. Now barely anyone can remember what they're called. They have been attacking any dragon with treasure or power and, as the Queen said, are clearly getting bolder if they would go after a Princess, let alone twice in one week. The Enclave has a plan to stop them though. That's what I came here to discuss with Queen Thorn." Meerkat explained.

"Oh? What is this plan?" Queen Thorn asked with a slight tone of hostility. She had noticed how her daughter was looking at Meerkat and immediately gone into overprotective mother mode.

Of course this went right over Meerkat and Sunny's heads.

"Oh, so the plan is that I stay here at the stronghold for a few months and look around in the library for anything related to The Masked. Then you give me a list of insignificant or fake secrets to give to them, and I pretend to join The Masked. I spy on them for you and if they plan an attack, I'll sneak up behind the leader and kill them, which they won't expect. I'll be in a mask, so even if

anyone sees me, they won't know I'm the traitor, and I can kill as many of The Masked as possible, which will make it much easier for your side.

Thorn contemplated this for a minute. *If he goes and spy's on this gang, it will get rid of that problem,* and *keep him away from Sunny. The only bad thing is that he would have to stay here for a few months. But then again, he might spend all his time in the library... ooh and I could offer him that room full of intercepted scrolls for his research if he starts spending too much time around Sunny... Yes, it sound like a good idea.*

"Yes." She said suddenly, startling both Sunny and Meerkat. "It's a good idea, I approve. I'll go have Six-claws organise a room for you now. There aren't many left since there are a bunch of SkyWing guests over for a negotiation over our spice trade, and some Seawings, and the Queens meeting is in a few weeks so there are at least a dozen dragons from each tribe here, but I'm sure Six-claws can find one."

Roommates and kisses

"WHAT!!!" Thorn thundered. "You're having a male Sandwing sleep in my daughter's spare room!?!" Six-claw's bow shrank even deeper and closer to the floor.

"I-it's the only room your majesty. The Q-Queens and their guards and the SkyWing ambassadors are taking every other room. I actually had to have half of the maids sleep in the barracks, along with all of the guards and their families. Plus most of the other low ranking dragons are in prison cells that we decorated like bedrooms. There is quite literally no space in the whole stronghold. There are cooks and their assistants sleeping in the kitchen, when their not cooking that is. A lot of dragons are even sleeping in the dining halls, myself included. The stronghold is overflowing! Sunny's spare room is the only room in the whole stronghold that isn't being used already. Mothers of eggs and expecting mothers are having to sleep in the hatchery and all the young dragonets and their parents are in the Wingery." Thorn sighed.

"Fine, but the second another room opens up you are moving him there." Thorn stated. "That's an order." Six-claws nodded and then crept out the door before Thorn could yell at him again.

...

"So this is my room." Sunny explained to Meerkat. "And then over here is the door to your room. I think the old owner of the room used it for parties or something, but I'm not much one for throwing parties for the fun of it, so it kinda just... sits there. Sorry if there's dust; I hardly ever go in there." Sunny talked while leading Meerkat around her room to his. They had just closed the door, when Meerkat turned back to Sunny.

"Hey umm, Sunny..." Meerkat began.

"Yeah K- I mean Meerkat." Sunny replied awkwardly. Meerkat looked at her with an air of confusion.

"What were you gonna call me?" He asked suspiciously.

Sunny stares at her talons, blushing. "...Kit Kat....." She admitted awkwardly. Meerkat almost laughed, but first he wanted to get her to admit what he already suspected. So he faked confusion at her answer and continued the questions.

"Why on earth would you call me Kit Kat?" He asked. Sunny somehow blushed even harder.

"Umm... Kit Kat is Umm... my pet name for you..." Sunny tried. Meerkat smiled.

"Well, that makes what I'm gonna ask you a bit easier then, doesn't it?"

"What are you going to ask me?" Sunny said, hoping it would be what she thought it would be.

"Princess Sunny of the Sandwings. Would you do me the pleasure of going out on a date with me tomorrow night?" Meerkat asked, bowing. Sunny squealed with excitement.

"Yes!!! Of course, a thousand times yes!" Sunny jumped up and threw her wings around Meerkat, before letting go and kissing him. Meerkat looked startled for a moment, but then grinned and kissed her back. When he finally pulled away, he smirked slightly.

"Would you have had that same reaction if I had asked you to be my girlfriend?" Meerkat asked.

"Duh!" Sunny responded, rolling her eyes.

"In that case..." Meerkat began, wiggling his eye ridges. Before he could finish, Sunny pulled him close and whispered in his ear:

"The answer to your question is yes, and will forever be yes." Meerkat grinned happily and kissed her again.

Spy

Almost a year later.

"Kit Kat, do you have to go?" Sunny asked sadly, wrapping a wing protectively over Meerkat's back. "This spying thing... it's dangerous. What if The Masked catch you? They might kill you, then what will happen to our egg?" Sunny gestured at the smooth, pale yellow egg with golden streaks that she had laid a few days before. Thorn had been furious of course, but was still excited to have a grand dragonet. Meerkat sighed.

"That is the reason I came here to begin with My Sun. I spent months preparing for this, I can't just back out now, when we need it the most. I finally have all the information and fake identity forms I need to get into The Masked, plus your mother gave me a good list of false secrets that I finally memorised. I can't put this off another day. I'm sorry." Meerkat explained, touching his nose to Sunny's in a gesture of love. Sunny wrapped her wings around him and pulled him close, burying her head in his shoulder and never wanting to let go. She had known this was coming, but... *What if he dies? What if he never gets a chance to know our precious dragonet? What if he dies and I don't know how to take care of it? He has a sister who has raised dragonets, so he took some lessons from her. I can't loose him...* Sunny worried. Meerkat hugged her back, with equal ferocity and Sunny started crying.

"Shhh, shhh My Sun." Meerkat reassured her, stroking her back with one wing. "I'll be careful, I promise. I've been training with Deathbringer for moons sake, and every other assassin in the Kingdom of Sand. And I won't take any unnecessary risks or do anything to put myself in danger. I'll be fine, I promise." Sunny hugged him tighter, wanting to stay in this moment, where it was safe for both of them; forever. But all too soon, the messenger came back, saying that Queen Thorn had decreed that it was time for Meerkat to leave. Sunny gave him one last kiss, filled with love and passion and tears, before they parted. Sunny watched with pain in

her eyes as Meerkat soared into the distance, carrying the satchel full of weapons that she had sewn into a necklace with her own talons. As she watched, he put it over his head and then dipped lower, out of sight.

Sunny began obsessively rearranging the nest made of materials from all her friends. Touching the egg were a few fronds of large leaves from the rainforest, courtesy of Glory and Deathbringer. Keeping the egg in place was a layer of mud from a particular place that was always warm, so the mud wouldn't freeze come wintertime. Peril had made a carved stone bowl, and Tsunami added a layer of soft seaweed at the bottom of the bowl, underneath the thin layer of quicksand from Queen Thorn. The idea of the quicksand was that if the dragonet hatched when nobody was there, it couldn't get out of the nest, so it couldn't hurt itself. Starflight has helped Sunny carefully calculate exactly how much sand she could put in without any risk of the dragonet suffocating. That was not his only gift however. After a few months of research, he had found for her some coals from the NightWing Island that were too cold to burn anything, but were self renewing, meaning they would imitate the heat of a Sandwing, and never go out unless put in water.

Soon she felt a warm wing on her shoulder, and Queen Thorn pulled her into a hug.

"I get it, how this is hard for you, but it has to be done. He'll come back soon enough, you'll see. At least you have your egg, and I've set a guard at every entrance so that nobody can attack it. Speaking of your egg, what are you going to name it?" Thorn asked holding Sunny close.

"Well, we have two options. You know how Meerkat's sister was Viper, the alternate dragonet of destiny?" Thorn furrowed her brow in confusion.

"Hold on, I thought Meerkat's sister was still alive. But Viper died in the war."

"Oh she did, Meerkat had two sisters, but he never talks about Viper. It makes him too sad." Sunny explained

"Ohhhh... that makes more sense. Wait does that mean Meerkat was raised by the Talons of Peace?" Thorn wondered.

"Yes actually, but when they sent Viper away, Meerkat and his sister went to the Scorpion den because they were mad at their parents." Sunny informed her mother.

"Oh, go on." Thorn insisted, looking interested.

"Anyways, so if it's a girl we're naming her Viper, and if it's a boy..." Sunny looked sideways at her mother. "We're naming him Beetle." Thorn smiled and hugged Sunny tighter. Suddenly they heard a scream from the direction of Sunny's room, and then it was cut off abruptly. Sunny clutched her mother's talons and Thorn pulled her closer in return. They stared at the door, expecting someone to break in and attack them at any second. After a minute, when no one came through the door, Thorn grabbed a sharp shard of rock that had fallen off the nest and crept forward, holding it like a small dagger. Her tail was arched above her head so she could stab and dragon who touched her. With one wing she waved for Sunny to stay back, and then opened the door quickly.

The note

Thorn jumped into the room and scanned it quickly. Sunny came after her and looked around as well. There were no dragons, and nothing out of place but the door being ajar. And the trail of blood from outside to Sunny's table. She crept in behind her mother, and carefully walked up to the bloodstained wood. On it were letters in blood, practically carved into the table. Sunny shuddered. The words were very ominous.

When two moons are at their fullest, the Dragonets of Destiny and their mates are to meet at the small grove of trees between the Scorpion den and the stronghold for a battle to the death. If they bring any dragon besides their mates, we shall go back into hiding and send assassins after each of the Dragonets individually. This is the only fighting chance you will get. Don't waste it.

The Masked.

Sunny shuddered and sat down wide eyed. She shivered from horns to tail, and stared at the message again. The words were written in blood, except for the last three. Those were written in Sandwing tail barb venom. Sunny looks around the room, and found a detached tail barb on her bed. She gagged and started making retching sounds, feeling sick. Thorn went over to the table to see what she had read, and when she finished, she dug her claws into the table.

"Moon licking cactus bombs!" She shouted, snorting a bit of flaming smoke out of her nose. She walked over to Sunny and rubbed her back. "Sunny sweetheart, you don't have to worry about that load of camel spit. Nobody's going to fight you to the death." Thorn comforted. Sunny looked at her sadly.

"But if I don't, A, my friends might try to go without me and get killed when I could have served them, and B, if none of us do, then they'll come and assassinate us. At least in this battle we can bring our mates to help us." Sunny sighed. "We have to do it."

Thorn shook her head. "Sweetheart we have guards for a reason." Sunny raised her eye ridges.

"Mom, one single dragon got all the way into my room without anyone but us noticing. If they sent a team of highly trained assassins in here, I'd be dead before anyone even noticed they were there."

Thorn sighed, rubbing her forehead. "We have until two moons are full. That's in a week. We'll have just enough time to send a letter to Clay and Peril. I suppose you're right, but nothing is stopping me from putting a medical station a few dunes away, because I *know* one of you is going to get hurt. Also, I'm setting up training for you. Lots and lots of training. By the time I'm done with you, The Masked won't stand a chance." Sunny squealed and hugged her mother.

"Thank you! And the training and medical station are going to be a *huge* help. We're going to kick some Masked butt!" Thorn laughed.

"Slow down Sunny, you need to train before you get all excited." Sunny nodded, trying to look serious, but inside she was jumping off the walls. *If I fight The Masked and win, Meerkat can come back! My mate will be there when my dragonet is hatched! Meerkat, I'm going to take down those half rate assassins.* Out loud she just said one thing.

"When do we start?"

Some Glorybringer fluff

Sunny flopped to the floor in front of her egg, groaning. She had been training for three days straight and had never been more tired in her life, not even when Kestrel punished her by making her stay up all night training, or when she had gone out on a date with Meerkat, but they had to stay outside all night because they got lost in the desert. Glory and Deathbringer came in behind her. Glory looked with interest at the egg in its varied nest. She reached out, and pointed to one of the coals.

"Are these the non burning coals that Starflight told me about?" She wondered aloud. Sunny nodded. "And this must be your egg. I don't think I've ever seen a Sandwing egg before, not unless you count me seeing your egg a few seconds before I hatched. Which I don't. I haven't really spent much time around Rainwing or Nightwing eggs or dragonets either, but I find them really cute." Deathbringer nudged her at the last part.

"We could have a dragonet. After all you do think they're cute. Or we could have a few of them..." He trailed off with a smug look on his face as Glory turned bright pink with embarrassment. She whacked Deathbringer with her wing and growled.

"I will tie you to a rock on the NightWing Island and not let you come to the battle if you keep talking like that." She threatened. Deathbringer pouted.

"I'm afraid that wouldn't work my Queen. I'd find some way out of there, and then get back to being your valiant bodyguard." Deathbringer announced, bowing. Glory rolled her eyes.

"More like my annoying stalker." She teased. Deathbringer sighed.

"You know however much you deny it me, you still love me." He smirked. Glory shook her head and sighed.

"You know me too well... Deathy." Deathbringer's face turned red at

the nickname. Then he smirked.

"I love you too... Glor Glor." Glory smacked him again, but then pulled him close and kissed him. Sunny laughed.

"Get a room you two!" Glory turned pink with embarrassment and Deathbringer chucked.

"Well," He said, gesturing at Sunny's egg. "Isn't *that* what happens when you get a room?" Sunny and Glory exchanged a glance, then nodded. They advanced on Deathbringer, who started backing into a corner nervously. Suddenly they both leaped at him and started smacking him with their wings. Five minutes later, he was huddled in a ball whimpering. Glory and Sunny grinned at each other.

"That's whatcha get!" They said simultaneously, and then ran into Sunny's room, locking Deathbringer in with her egg. She and Glory snickered as Deathbringer realised the door was locked and started pounding in it and yelling for them to let him out.

"Glory? Glory wait up I- why can't I open the door?!? WHATS GOING ON? GLORY LEMME OUT THIS ISN'T FUNNY!!! GLORY!!!!!" Glory and Sunny were rolling on the floor laughing.

"Actually.. It's really *very* funny." Glory laughed. Sunny paused.

"No, he's right, it's not funny." Glory looked at her, puzzled. "It's hilarious!" Sunny shouted, laughing so hard her eyes watered. Glory shook with laugher, and Sunny helped her up. Then the Rainwing Queen and the Sandwing Princess left the room, leaning on each other and still laughing, going to wait for the arrival of their other friends. Back in Sunny's spare room, Deathbringer roared in frustration, which only made the two girls laugh harder.

The battle

A/N
Warning. Much gore, venom and Deathbringer bringing death. Also, major plot twists ahead. Read at your own risk.

Sunny stood atop a large sand dune, searching the desert for movement. Meerkat had assured her that he would be super extra careful not to make anyone in The Masked angry or suspicious, and that he would just seem like an eager volunteer. He had also told her that The Masked intended to come around midnight, which, if Starflight's calculations were correct, was in a few minutes. They had all voted that the blind librarian should stay as far back as he could and that Fatespeaker would be keeping him safe. To Sunny's dismay, Clay had insisted on having Peril guard her, although Sunny thought she didn't need protection, her friends would be her friends. *They* never *think that I can take care of myself. Well here's my time to prove them wrong!* Deep mid thought, Sunny hardly noticed the little streak whizzing by the edge of her vision, until it struck Peril in the chest, melting before it could do more than dent a scale. Tsunami roared and lunged at the tree where the arrow had come from, just as a dragon in a Mudwing mask leapt out to attack. Instantly it was pandemonium. Starflight was shouting questions.

"What happened? What's going on? Did they attack yet? Is anybody hurt?" Fatespeaker growled at him to stay quiet, and he deflated visibly. A dragon in a Rainwing mask threw itself at Sunny, tail raised, but Peril knocked it out of the sky.

Tsunami was battling two dragons in NightWing masks. She thwacked one over the head with her tail, while clawing for the other. She failed to reach it however, and the remaining Masked member clawed at one of her wings angrily. She roared in pain, and twisted to hit it with her tail, but was yanked down. The dragon she had hit over the head had not passed out as she thought it had, and was now grabbing her tail. The Sandwing above her slashed out with its own tail, but she caught it and snapped the tail bone. The

dragon screamed with pain, and lunges at Tsunami. Just in time, Riptide slammed into the Sandwing holing her tail, which loosened it's grip enough for Tsunami to escape. The two Masked crashed into each other mid flight, and knocked each other out. Riptide and Tsunami tied the dragons up with their own tails, kissed quickly and then flew back into the battle.

Deathbringer has gotten separated from Glory at the start of the battle. He flew over the fighting until he located her. She was facing off with a dragon in a SkyWing mask and as Deathbringer watched, she camouflaged and appeared to vanish. Deathbringer was so engrossed in watching his Queen win the fight, that he didn't see the Sandwing in a Mudwing mask until it knocked him off balance. He twisted around and back winged a few times, then blasted a bolt of fire right into the little eyehole of the mask. The dragon screamed in pain, and Deathbringer threw a dagger at its throat, which hit straight through the bone, killing it instantly. Deathbringer flipped and dove straight into the back of one of the dragons who was advancing on Fatespeaker, fracturing the dragon's spine, then pushed off it's falling body to slit another dragon's throat with a chakram. Then he flipped and neatly sliced a dragon open from the base of its neck to its tail. By the time the third body hit the ground, Deathbringer was at Glory's side again. There were almost twenty dead or passed out dragons on the sand, Deathbringer noticed. Four were his own doing, two were Riptide and Tsunami's work, six were Peril's victims, but other two had black venom marks on their heads, which meant his Queen had clearly taken care of herself when he was away. There were also three dragons who appeared to have been killed by a Sandwing barb to the heart, but he decided he could solve that mystery later. As he watched, Glory camouflaged and then latched onto the neck of a dragon masked as a Skywing. She dug her venom spitting teeth into his neck and shot her deadly poison into his body. Deathbringer was impressed with the trick, but not too impressed to turn around and snap the neck of a Sandwing in a Seawing mask.

Sunny had hardly gotten any blows in on any of the dragons before Peril would come up and burn them to a crisp. The Masked's numbers were dropping quickly. Twenty. Fourteen. Thirteen. Nine. Six. Five. Three. She even saw Meerkat kill a few of them. He shone

out from all the rest, and once she spotted him, she couldn't stop staring. He was wearing an Icewing mask, which was only a few tones lighter than his real scales, which glowed in the rising sun. As he made his fourth kill, Sunny looked around. There were only two dragons left standing besides Meerkat, and they looked quite beat up. Sunny heard Tsunami swearing.

"Shit, I knew we shoulda killed them!" She growled, advancing. A blast of burning venom stopped her, and she back winged quickly. Glory and Deathbringer flew smugly side by side and then repeated what they had done. Glory shot a stream of venom, and then Deathbringer breathed a blast of fire after it. The effect was that the venom partially boiled and so it was scalding hot when it hit the dragon's scales. The two final members of The Masked dropped to the ground, screaming. Over the noise of dying dragons, Sunny heard another sound. One that she had been fearing she would never hear again. Meerkat.

"Hey Sunny! A little help here!" Meerkat called, flying up to her while trying to untie the knot in the back of his Icewing mask. Suddenly, a flash of brown scales shoved Meerkat from the sky.

Plot twist

A/N
Warning, more gore, and please do not murder me for what I did in this chapter. Believe me, this is all part of a grand plan that cannot happen without this. I am *very* sorry

Clay had been flapping uselessly in the middle of the battlefield for a few minutes. He had just shaken a dragon who was chasing him by leading it into range of Glory's venom. He flew tiredly in Peril and Sunny's direction. He just hung in midair for a few minutes watching his friends totally slaughter The Masked. Suddenly he heard a dragon shout Sunny's name. A dragon in a bloodstained Icewing mask was flying straight at Sunny, fumbling with something on his neck, possibly a weapon. Clay knew he had to make a snap decision. So he flew at the masked dragon, intending to body slam it out of the sky and pin it to the sand. He missed. He didn't miss hitting the dragon, he messed up with where he put his talons. His intention was to land on top of the dragon with his arms on either side of it's neck. Instead, his talons slipped on the dragon's scales, and slit its throat, hitting a vital artery. Clay landed partially under the dragon who was still standing, but then tripped over his own tail and landed on Clay.

From the sky, Peril saw this. From where she was flying, it looked like the last of The Masked members was attacking Clay. Peril roared with fury and dropped down to the sand. She jumped onto the Sandwing's back, and heard a gurgling scream as blood poured from the dragon's throat. She growled and threw her wings over the masked dragon's. When she was sure it must be dead, she threw the body aside, then went to go check Clay for scratches. And then Sunny screamed.

It was a scream of pain and fury and grief. She had flew there, frozen as she watched Clay and Peril murder her mate. Now she screamed in rage and dove down to the sands. She rushed over to Meerkat's scorched body and peeled the burnt mask off his face. She

checked his pulse, and saw that he was still alive, but barely. Sunny gently touched his cheek.

"Kit Kat?" She whispered, tears starting to stream down her face. "Kit Kat wake up!" She cried, shaking his shoulder. Meerkat's eyes opened the slightest bit and Sunny gasped happily. "That's right, wake up, it's gonna be ok, there's a healers station right over that dune." Sunny pointed. Meerkat coughed up a gush of blood. Sunny stared at him with concerned look in her eyes. "Kit Kat?"

"Tell-" Meerkat choked out, then coughed. He tried again. "Tell... tell our dragonet I love her..." Meerkat wheezed. "And know that I'll always love you... My Sun..." Meerkat reached his neck up with a wince, and kissed Sunny one last time. By the time the kiss was over, he had died. Sunny sobbed, her body shaking with grief. Clay walked over and put a talon on her shoulder.

"Calm down Sunny, it will-" Sunny cut him off with a growl.

"YOU! YOU'RE THE REASON HE'S DEAD! YOU AND YOUR STUPID MURDEROUS GIRLFRIEND!" Sunny roared, throwing the nearest rock at Peril. Clay shrank back, and Sunny reached out and clawed him in the face. He jumped back, covering his snout with one talon.

"I- I'm sorry! I didn't know!" Clay yelped. Peril growled at Sunny, and to her surprise, Sunny turned and growled back.

Sunny roared a blast of flame into Clay's face, and Peril jumped forward to stop her, but then drew back, knowing it would be impossible to touch her without hurting her.

Glory and Tsunami just sat in stunned stillness as their little sister breathed fire on their big brother. Glory turned to Tsunami.

"Am I hallucinating?" She asked, with a traumatised expression on her face. Tsunami looked at her with the exact same expression.

"I don't think so. If you are, I'm having the same hallucination." She shuddered. Starflight stumbled up to them.

"What's going on? Why do I smell fire? And what's Sunny shouting about?" Starflight interrogated. Glory shuddered and looked at him.

"Sunny and shouting. Two words I never thought I'd hear in the same sentence. Just like Tsunami and calm!" Glory halfheartedly joked, trying to lighten the mood. Tsunami hardly heard her, but turned to Starflight and answered his question.

"Sunny is attacking Clay and trying to attack Peril." Starflight gasped.

"Sunny? Why in Pyrrhia would *Sunny* attack anyone?" Starflight echoed, stunned.

"Because Clay and Peril accidentally murdered her boyfriend." Deathbringer said matter-of-factly, landing behind Starflight. He was the only one who didn't look permanently traumatised, but even he was rather horrified.

Peril had realised that if she stood it front of Clay, Sunny's flames couldn't hurt him. That was fine with Sunny. She kicked talon fulls of sand into Peril's eyes every few seconds, and yelled at Clay.

"YOU MOONS BLASTED FOX DUNG COVERED PEICE OF CAMEL SPIT!!!" She screamed. "I HATE YOU, I HATE YOU, I HATE YOU!!! I'M NEVER LETTING YOU OR PERIL ANYWHERE NEAR MY DRAGONET! I'M GOING TO HAVE YOU BANNED FROM THE DESERT PERMANENTLY!"

Sunny's brain was screaming too. *He's dead. He's dead. He's dead and he could have been alive and well but he's dead because of these IDIOTS. Because of them my dragonet will never know her father. Her. Yes, my dragonet is going to be female.* Sunny paused her screaming insults and throwing hard objects for a moment. *My dragonet. My daughter. When was her egg due to hatch again? It was due for about a week after Meerkat... left. But it's been a week. It's been a week and I heard that mothers know the gender of their dragonet* the day it hatches. *That means she might hatch today.* Sunny's eyes widened. She flew to Glory and Tsunami. Deathbringer stepped in front of Glory, suspecting Sunny might attack her too. Instead she grabbed her two friend's wrists.

"Come." She ordered, in such a commanding, royal tone that Riptide snapped his head up and looked around, fearing that Queen Coral

had somehow appeared in the desert. Tsunami and Glory followed her, not daring to question her in this mood. Deathbringer started to follow, but Sunny stopped him.

"Can you guard... Meerkat's body?" Sunny asked in her commanding tone. Deathbringer paused, but the girls were dots on the horizon by the time it occurred to him to ask what he was supposed to be guarding it from. He shrugged, assuming she must mean from carrion, and maybe from Clay and Peril too, considering her current feelings towards them.

Sunny soared straight to the stronghold, dragging her friends behind her. She had never flown so fast in her life, and even Tsunami, with her strong muscles from swimming, had trouble keeping up.

Glory eventually caught up enough to ask. "Where on Pyrrhia are we going Sunny?" Sunny just growled, and flew even faster.

The hatching

When they got to Sunny's spare room, everyone but Sunny was shocked at what they found. The egg had cracks all down the sides, and a few pieces of eggshell were scattered on the ground. Sunny panted, and took Starflight's coals out of the nest. Then she rang a little bell, and a butler came to the door.

"Get me a bowl with the same proportions as this one." Sunny ordered, pointing at Peril's bowl. The butler looked startled, but nodded and rushed off. Sunny picked Glory's leaves and Clay's mud off her egg, then grabbed the extra leaves from the corner. As soon as the butler came back, she began scooping the quicksand and seaweed out of Peril's bowl, then putting it in the new bowl. When she had scooped as much sand as possible without disturbing the egg, she carefully picked it up and handed it to Glory.

"You and Deathbringer are totally going to have dragonets, so here practice holding a hatching egg." Glory gaped. Sunny ignored her and went back to reorganising the nest. She made it exactly how it was before, but minus Clay and Peril's gifts. Then she gently took her egg back from Glory, who was still staring at her, slack jawed. Sunny wrapped Glory's leaves carefully around the egg, and then stared at it like it was her last hope in the world. The egg quivered, and then split down the middle. The dragonet who crawled out was more obviously a hybrid than Sunny, but in a strange way *more* normal looking. She had black streaks in her Sandwing mane, but no Nightwing-like spines at the tip like Sunny had. Her build was pure Sandwing, from her sharp horns to her ebony black tail barb. The only other part of her that screamed "hybrid" was twisting pattern of gold scales on each forearm, as though she was wearing a bracelet. Her eyes though, scared Sunny slightly. They were dark green, but possessed none of the warm undertones of Meerkat. Nor did they reflect the light cheerfully like her own eyes did. In fact, she had only seen that cold gaze on one dragon. Blister. Sunny shuddered and then took a closer look. It didn't quite resemble Blister after all. Instead, the dragonet's eyes resembled the look she

had seen a few times in Thorn's eyes. But not often. Only when Thorn was feeling... murderous. Sunny shook her wings out, trying to shake away the thoughts as well.

"Her name is Viper." Sunny announced. Sunny felt her dragonet's eyes staring at her. It felt as if the little dragon had sucked all of Sunny's cold fury at Clay and Peril into herself, and now it was hiding, deep down inside her. Like a viper.

A/n, please read

Please tell me in the comments which ships you want a flashback for. By that I mean telling the story of either their the dragonet hatching, being named, first words, etc. I'm definitely doing Turtlejou and Moonbli. Here are that other ships you can vote for me to write flashbacks for.

Lynxter

Glorybringer

Cleril

Starspeaker

Ripnami (but if you vote for Ripnami you need to give a name suggestion because I can't think of a good name. Also you can say how many dragonets, what their genders are and what their body colours are. I'm thinking a girl and a boy, but Idk. But somehow I already decided who to ship them with... even though they haven't been made into characters yet... sigh.

Viper

Viper slashed out with her tail, clawed her enemy's snout and curled into a backwards roll before he could retaliate. The dragon leaped at her, flailing wildly with a pair of throwing stars. Viper had time to roll her eyes, before executing a perfect barrel roll to the right, and shooting a blast of smoke at her attacker. He stumbled, blinded by the smoke, and coughed loudly. Viper jumped on him, shoved his head into the floor and stabbed him in the spine with her tail barb.

"Owwwweeee! Viper, you stabbed me too hard again! I'm telling..." The dragon beneath her squealed.

"And would you like me to tell Deathbringer that you forgot to throw your throwing stars again? Or that you forgot to fake your injuries? You ruin the whole session Flicker!" Viper pointed out. Flicker made a hmph noise and wriggled our from under her.

"Ok, ok, you win!" He growled, yanking the protection off of his claws and venom teeth. "I don't see why I can't shoot my venom at you, it barely hurts if it lands on your scales!"

"Same reason Deathbringer won't let me stab you with a non covered spear. It might hit a spot where it doesn't kill you, but the likelyhood of you surviving is pretty low." Viper pointed out. Flicker sighed.

"Fine! Go find my sister then, she's a good match for you in training!" Flicker growled, running out of the room. Viper waited a moment then grinned.

"Finally! We got rid of him!" Viper sighed. Firefly melted out of the shadows in the corner of the room. She had learned to use the parts of her body that could change colour to cover the parts the could not, so she could hide in a shadowy place nearly undetectable. But then she could look like a normal Nightwing. Her Rainwing scales worked normally, but she could only change the bottom half of her

body. Hence her name, Firefly. The scales became gradually lighter as they went closer to her tail. Being able to vanish just the back part of you body had some perks. Viper and Firefly had managed to sneak into several night clubs and bars by Firefly making fake scars or missing limbs, then saying she was hurt in the war. Seeing as the war had ended seven years ago, this made everyone believe that Firefly was older than seven. Viper would just stand imposingly behind Firefly, doing her best to inconspicuously cover her unique gold markings. Lately though, they had figured out that if they stuck some rubies onto the markings with some slime from a particular kind of tree frog, the markings looked like jewellery. They had also learned to part Viper's crest so that the black stripes looked like shadows from where the crest was parted. With the combination of their excellent disguises and royal status, they could get into pretty much anywhere in Pyrrhia, save for the Kingdom of the Sea, or certain Queen's palaces.

"So... you wanna ditch training, or actually do our homework?" Firefly joked. Viper snorted.

"Since when have *we* ever done our homework? Cmon, there's that fight club we were gonna go to! We can do our homework there. Technically fighting fifteen Icewings in a row *is* studying the battle techniques of other tribes." Viper wheedled. Firefly smirked, and then froze. Viper spun around. Flicker was standing in the doorway, eyes wide.

"Fight club?" He echoed.

"Oh crap." The two Princesses swore simultaneously.

Flashback (Moonbli)

Moon sat beside her splintering egg, a combination of joyful and terrified. She and Qibli were sitting in the glow of one shining moon. She had insisted that the egg be hatched under as many moons as possible. Her exact words had been: "She's in a prophecy, and her name is Vision, she should have a fighting chance at getting NightWing powers."

Suddenly, Moon felt the all too familiar pounding at the base of her neck, slowly spreading up to her skull. She winced and leaned against Qibli, trying to stop the vision. *No no no! Not right now, stop it!* She yelled at herself. It was no use. The vision came. She saw herself, yelling something at Qibli, whowas standing over her and glaring menacingly. Suddenly a small Icewing Nightwing hybrid dragonet popped out from under her wing, and gave a long monologue to Qibli. He backed down a little, gaping then said something quickly and flew away.

Then the vision was gone. It was odd, Moon could usually hear what a dragon was saying in her visions. Moon looked up at Qibli, wondering what was happening in that vision, and how it could change his carefree expression to one of such anger and sadness as she had seen in the vision. She leaned in closer to him, hoping that what Darkstalker had told her so long ago about her visions being only of *possible* and not *definite* futures was true. She had often wondered how Peacemaker and Hope were doing. She hadn't had time to visit them since she laid her egg, and doubted she would have any more time with new hatched dragonet. Qibli pulled Moon from her thoughts by pulling off his skyfire to think *Look, it's hatching!* Excitedly at her. Moon and Qibli watched the egg intently, although now that his skyfire was off, Moon could see that Qibli was also keeping an eye out for danger. She rolled her eyes at him and hugged him tightly.

"Still the same old Qibli." Moon laughed. Qibli stared at her quizzically.

"Now what in Pyrrhia does that mean?"

"Your mind. It's still like a reading a dozen scrolls at once. You think faster than I can comprehend sometimes about a dozen and a half things at once." She explained, pressing her head into his chest. He kissed her quickly, then gently turned her head back to the splitting silver eggshell. It cracked in half slowly, and to both of their surprise, a dragonet landed in each half of the eggshell. Twins. Now Moon understood why it had been hard to lay. But there was another surprise in the eggshell. One of the dragonets was visibly half Icewing. She was dark blue, with a NightWing build and Icewing spikes. She had black stars on ice blue wings and pale green eyes. The other one appeared to be pure NightWing, but she was curled up so that you could hardly see her. The two new parents stood above the broken egg and the twins in stunned silence. Then Moon gently picked up the little blue and white dragonet and cradled her in her arms.

"How.....?" She started, but trailed off at Qibli's furious look. She saw inside his head what he was thinking. *There is only one way a pure Nightwing can produce a dragonet that looks like that. If the father is an Icewing. Who's the one Icewing she might be in love with? Winter. Of course. I'm an idiot, thinking she could ever love me.* Moon winced, placing the little blue and white dragonet under her wing and covering her head.

"Stop it please stop! It's not like that, I don't know any better then you do how this happened." Moon pleaded. Qibli growled at her.

"Well I sure have pretty good guess. They're Winter's, aren't they?" Moon shook her head.

"They *are* your dragonets, I swear. You have to believe me. I haven't seen Winter in years. Please. Trust me." Moon begged. The little blue dragonet stepped out from under her wing. To Moon's surprise, her eyes had turned from light green to ice blue. She stepped in front of Moon and started to speak. Clear, linear words, but they made little sense.

"You are both right. Sandwing, Vision is your dragonet. It is only at the whims of the universe that I shared entrance into this world

with her. You are not my father, but then, this Nightwing here is not my mother. I am Whiteout, sister of Darkstalker. You have been chosen to be my caretakers until this body grows into its adult form. Similarly, I have been chosen to teach her the ways of the ancient Nightwings, so she can learn to control her powers. She will need full control over this gift, as she can see every possible future, but only at certain times." Moon and Qibli gaped, stunned into silence. Qibli's mouth opened and closed, until he finally choked something out.

"I need to think about this." He turned, beating his wings to soar up onto the sky, in the direction of their home.

...

Moon came back to the house around sunrise. She wanted to talk with Qibli, and spend more time with a Whiteout, who had been making strange mumbling sounds the whole way back. Vision was still asleep in her talons, but at least she had shifted around a little, so Moon could be sure she was alright. She placed the dragonets in the room she had prepared, then groaned. *Stupid! Why didn't I think of this?* Moon sighed.

"Hey Whiteout, do you mind sharing a bed with your.... with Vision?" Moon asked, remembering how Whiteout had denied any kinship with Qibli, Vision or herself. Whiteout shrugged, So Moon tucked them into bed together. Then she left to go see Qibli.

"Hey Qibbs? You wanna talk?" She asked cautiously as she opened the door. He turned and hugged her, pulling her into the room.

"Sorry I got so worked up earlier. I love you Moon. I just... Well you know what I thought." Qibli apologised. "Please forgive me?" Moon smiled.

"On two conditions..." Moon said slyly. Qibli's eyes widened. He had been expecting her to either say "Yes" or "No" immediately.

"Which are...?" He asked tentatively. Moon smirked, an expression she rarely wore.

"You help me raise our dragonets." Qibli looked startled.

"Of course? Why wouldn't I?" Moon smiled.

"Just checking. You didn't seem too keen on it a few hours ago." She teased. Qibli stared at the floor. *Here it comes. Condition two. I wonder if she's going to make me go live on an iceberg for the rest of the year, or make me sleep in the Scorpion den next to the oasis for a week? I deserve it, honestly. But I hope it's not something too bad, like-* Moon cut off his thoughts with a gentle talon on his shoulder.

"The second condition, is that you let me do this." Moon said playfully, then kissed him passionately. Qibli kissed her back thinking: *Note to self. Add this to the list of things I adore about Moonwatcher.*

Flashback (Turtlejou)

A/N
This ended up being more about Anemone than I expected. Also, whoever finds the Zootopia reference first picks which ship I do next. Also, 3 919 Words! Hell yeah!!! This is why I didn't update for a few days. And (Hallelujah!) I actually managed to keep it all in Turtle's perspective for once.

"So, how's it going with your Rainwing?" Turtle asked his sister as they finished putting up the big wooden sign with "**Animus shack**" written in bold, red lettering. Anemone gave him a sly grin.

"I'll tell you, if you tell me how it's going with *your* Rainwing." She snickered.

"What about her? You know all the details already. We've been dating for three months, my crush is finally returned and she's still the most awesome dragon I've ever met." Anemone pouted.

"Why can't you have more *drama!* Your relationship is my only entertainment in this..... ummm.....rainforest." Turtle raised an eye ridge. "What? You find something bad about this rainforest!" Anemone hissed indignantly

"Well... ummmm... it's..... wait a minute....." Anemone smirked, and Turtle saw her wave a talon oddly, but decided she was just motioning for him to go on. Turtle rolled his eyes and went back to working on the Animus shack. A few hours later, he perked up and turned to Anemone. "Oh, I've got it! Mosquitos! They keep flying into my gills and biting me. And flies, although they are good at warning you when your about to step in sloth poop." Anemone sighed. "Anyways, that's why we're making the Animus shack. So that-" Anemone cut him off.

"So that I can use my powers for good and make my mark on the rainforest. I know, I know." Turtle nodded. "But it's supposed to be more of an advice centre than just dragons coming up to me and me

enchanting stuff." Anemone rolled her eyes. "The animus part is only for things that can't be accomplished otherwise or are very important." She imitated. Turtle groaned.

"Do I *really* sound like *that* when I'm talking about magic?" Anemone nodded. "Wow. Sorry." Turtle apologised. Anemone giggled, then nodded to a pile of copper and silver wires in front of two stools. Turtle was confused at first, but then realised Anemone had sat down and was twisting them into bracelets. "Hey Anemone?" She looked up. "Want me to get Kinka to help us with this?" Anemone nodded vigorously but Turtle caught her sly smirk and snicker before she turned back to her delicate work. Turtle glared. *Ugh. Anemone, always backhandedly teasing me about Kinkajou. Wait. I have an idea*. "Hey Anemone! Why don't go ask *your* Rainwing to help toooooo....." He teased. She shot upright on her stool and growled at him.

"Oh you better not! Try that and you'll be turned into a poison dart frog before you can blink!" She warned. Turtle smirked and soared away before she could tell if he was joking or not.

...

Turtle dove onto the platform the second he saw it. Kinkajou poked her head out the window.

"Kinka!" He called happily. He ran inside and hugged her tightly. "I missed you!"

"You saw me this morning idiot." She teased, kissing him on the nose.

Turtle stepped back, then did a double take as he realised that she wasn't her usual pink-yellow colour. Instead she was an anxious swirl of emotion. Turtle had learned what all the scale colours meant, and the ones he was on his normally cheerful girlfriend disturbed him. Her base colour was green, fading from green so light it was almost white on her horns, to green so dark it could be black at certain angles. These were the colours of fear, worry, and being upset. All over, she was covered in shifting patterns of purplish orange, speckled with tiny flecks of subdued greenish

yellow. The purplish orange meant she was very confused, yet the greenish yellow meant she was excited for something, but too worried to realise it yet. The majority of her talons was seeped in a depressed blue-grey up until her clawtips, which were black with sadness. Turtle wrapped his wings around Kinkajou.

"What's wrong Kinka? Whatever it is I can fix it." Turtle soothed. Kinkajou broke down crying at this.

"B-But you can't fix it!!!" She wailed. Turtle looked concerned.

"Ummmm... I can try at least? Besides, I have Animus magic. I can do anything to make you feel better. Kinkajou turned an even more vibrant shade of fear.

"But you CAN'T!!!" She cried. "It would be wrong!" Turtle frowned.

"It's fine, my soul will be alright. We already figured out that it's a choice, and magic just makes you more vulnerable to the wrong one." Kinkajou shook her head, still sobbing violently.

"Turtle that's not what I meant." Turtle furrowed his brow in confusion.

"Then what *do* you mean? I don't even know what's making you like this." Kinkajou tightened her wings around Turtle.

"I- I... I can't tell you. If I do you'll hate me forever before I even get a chance to explain!" She sobbed.

Turtle kissed her on the head and bent down to be nose to nose with the smaller Rainwing. She looked down, staining the wood floor a dark brown with her flow of tears. Turtle took Kinkajou's face in his talons and moved her head so she would look at him. Her face was so sad that he almost started crying himself. The depressed blue-grey had spread up her body, but every tear track revealed the squirming array of fearful and confused colours beneath the sadness.

"Oh Kinkajou. Nothing that you could ever do would make me hate you. Nothing. I love you... I love you so much." Kinkajou twisted away from him and lay on the floor, staring at her talons. The grey

broke up like storm clouds after it rains and revealed pale lime green, flecked with white, which usually indicated paralysing fear. Kinkajou looked up and whispered quietly to Turtle.

"I'm pregnant." Then, she vanished into the colour of the floorboards. Turtle sat in stunned silence for a moment, before flaring his wings and grinning.

"Kinkajou! What on earth would possess you to make you think I'd be mad?" She appeared in grey with little streaks of emerald and tangerine. She just stared at him, looking slightly dumbfounded. At first Turtle thought she was surprised he wasn't angry, but then he realised that was the look she wore when she was waiting for him to figure something out. So he thought hard for a minute. Then suddenly he froze. Kinkajou bit her lip, knowing that he had figured it out, and started to camouflage slowly, from her feet up. Turtle grabbed her arm just as it vanished and held onto her. She flinched and turned white around his talons, and Turtle loosened his grip, but still held on firmly.

"How...? We never... you know..." Turtle tried. Kinkajou sighed, the purple returning to her scales. At first he thought it was the colour of guilt, and a few furious thoughts flashed through his mind. *Did she cheat on me? She must have, that's the colour of guilt and embarrassment. We never-*
Turtle cut himself off as he realised that it was too orangey to be guilt, so he concluded that it must be confusion.

Kinkajou began to cry again. "I- I don't *know* Turtle! I just felt super exhausted a few hours ago and then a few hours later I woke up vomiting and feeling crazy weird and so I asked Tamarin what she thought was wrong with me and she said that I might be pregnant and said I should check and then-" Kinkajou broke off, gasping for air and sniffling. Turtle patted her on the back. "And then I went and snuck into the healers hut and stole one of the pregnancy tests things that you and Anemone made, and then I used it but it said yes so I thought it must be broken since I've never mated with anyone in my life so I tried three more all from different baskets and they all said the same thing so it must be right and I just finished throwing them away right before you came back." Kinkajou said in a rush, then started sobbing again. "Please don't be mad..."

Turtle wrapped his wings around Kinkajou and she rested her head on his shoulder. He picked her up, being careful of her stomach and carried her to the soft couch coated in springy moss. She rested her head on his lap and he stroked her neck, thinking through the possibilities. There were three in his mind. One, they got drunk at a party and went a little too far. Two, the pregnancy tests were broken. Three, an Animus enchanted her to be pregnant. He thought through number one, but they hadn't been out of the Rainforest in almost a year, and Kinkajou hadn't gotten drunk since... Well never. He moved on to option two. That couldn't be right, his coral tracking device proved that if there was an enchantment on something, it would work, one way or another and couldn't be "broken". On to option three. An Animus enchantment. As much as Turtle hated to admit it, even to himself, it was possible he has been dreaming about Kinkajou and enchanted her in his sleep. He shied away from the awful thought, as it lead to more awful thoughts related to his Animus magic being the cause of Kinkajou's pregnancy. Some of them a bit dirtier than others. Instead Turtle ran through the mental list of Animuses he knew were currently alive. *Me, Stonemover, and... Anemone.* Turtle sat bolt upright in his seat on the couch. Kinkajou stirred. She had fallen asleep on his lap. Turtle went back to stroking her neck until her breathing steadied. *Anemone. The weird hand gestures she was making. Saying "Why can't you have more drama?" right before? It* must *be her. I. Will. Kill. Her.* Turtle growled and gently shifted Kinkajou's head from his lap. He hoped he wouldn't be gone long, but... Just in case, he grabbed a little notepad and scrawled:

- I am going out. I should be back soon, but if I'm not back by tomorrow, go ask Anemone about it.

He stuck the note a few inches in front of Kinkajou and then dove off the platform.

...

Turtle crashed down in front of Anemone, immediately tackling her to the rainforest floor. She yelped, startled, and Turtle snarled, then grabbed a big, flat leaf. He pressed against Anemone's chest, hard, and she winced.

"I enchant this leaf so that only I can take it on and off a dragon's scales and as long as it is touching a dragon, they can only tell the truth." Turtle hissed. Anemone stared at him with wide, terrified eyes. "Did you enchant Kinkajou to be pregnant?" He asked dangerously. Anemone tried to close her mouth, but failed and blurted the answer.

"Yes. The exact enchantment was for her to be pregnant from the first time you slept in the same bed while officially dating." Turtle gagged.

"You disgust me Anemone."

She gave him a "Sorry it's just how I am" face and he growled at her.

"So she's four months pregnant."

Anemone was the one who gagged this time. "You slept in the same bed on night *one* of dating?" Turtle rolled his eyes in disbelief.

"We live in the *same* tree hut, and it has *one* bedroom, which isn't big enough for two beds you idiot!" Anemone made an O shape with her mouth. Turtle took the leaf off Anemone and got up. Turtle paced around the clearing. He stopped at a tree and rested his head on it. "What am I gonna *do* Anemone? I don't know how to be a father! And forget telling our parents. Mother would execute me, and Kinkajou's parental figure is *Queen Glory*. She would probably tie me and Kinkajou to a tree, then tell Deathbringer we tried to assassinate her." Turtle shuddered. Anemone patted his wing. Turtle turned to her. "Oh and you had better be the best Aunt ever and dragonet-sit every time we ask you to. I don't care *how* busy you are." Anemone nodded silently. But as soon as Turtle left she squealed with excitement.

"TAMARIN!!!" Anemone called. The blind Rainwing materialised our of the trees and awkwardly flew down to Anemone. "You get to be the *second* best aunt ever!" She teased. Tamarin laughed.

"Never. I'll fight you for best aunt all the way." She joked back. "On a more serious note," Anemone made an "aww" sound. "When

should we tell Turtle and Kinkajou about our wedding? I mean it is next month." Anemone wrinkled her snout, pondering.

"Hmmm.... how about when Turtle stops being mad at me for officially sailing Turtlejou." Tamarin burst into giggles.

"Sooooo in other words we should elope?" Anemone snickered, but swatted playfully at her fiancée. Tamarin swatted back but missed. Anemone laughed. "Meanie." Tamarin fake-pouted.

"Come on, you know you love me." Anemone teased.

"Do I know that? Yes, yes I do." Tamarin replied, then kissed Anemone.

...

Turtle took a deep breath and let it out slowly. The sound of Kinkajou's wingbeats faded out slowly. Leaving him to protect their egg from danger and other Rainwings seeing it, lest they tell Glory. Turtle shifted uncomfortably and stared intently at the door. Kinkajou had just left to go check out three dozen new scrolls and return fifteen at the library. They had decided that their dragonet should be told stories from the day she hatched, so they were trying to find a few dozen of the best dragonet books in the Rainforest. *Ah ha! At last, something* bad *about the Rainforest. Bad scroll choices. I'll have to write that one down for Anemone.* Turtle and Anemone were back on speaking terms, and now had a long running joke where they would take turns trying to find something bad about the Rainforest once a month. If they couldn't think of something, they would have to make lunch for the other for a week. Turtle had only won a few times, and Anemone even less. Turtle got to his talons to grab a price of note paper, then heard light talons thumping down on the balcony. Turtle froze as he saw a beetle green and orange wing flash in front of the window. There was only one dragon who wore those colours and would come to see Kinkajou. *Queen Glory. She's here. Oh crap...* Turtle quickly reached for the nearest random object then leapt in front of the egg, glaring his wings. Just a second later, beetle green talons wrapped around the door and it created open slowly. Turtle quickly looked at the object in his talons. A banana. *Eh, could have been worse*. He sliced it open and

was peeling it when Queen Glory stepped in through the doorway. She instantly noticed how Turtle's wings were flared, and Turtle mentally facetaloned at his stupidity. The Queen turned purple and blue, the colours of curiosity and confusion. Turtle took a bite of banana. *Ewww!* He'd forgotten how much he hated bananas. Turtle tried not to gag. Glory raised an eye ridge and looked pointedly at Turtle's flared back wings.

"Uhhh, Kinkajou isn't here... sorry." He blurted after Glory had stared expectantly at him for a moment. She sighed.

"Library *again?* She's been there every time I've come for a month." Glory sighed.

"Uh, ummm, yeah, we've been doing this "couples reading" thing Anemone told us about." Turtle stammered. Glory nodded slowly.

"Yeah..... so why are you holding your wings like that?" Turtle paled. Glory looked mildly worried. "Are you ok? You look pale, maybe I should take you to the healers-" Glory started towards him. Turtle's eyes widened.

"No!" He cut her off. Glory looked surprised and slightly suspicious. Turtle continued quickly. "I uh, I hurt my wing and can't fly very well. Besides, Kinkajou will be expecting me to be here when she gets back." Glory stared at his wing.

"I can get Deathbringer to carry you?"

"Um, no it's fine the healers already checked it out and it's just a sprain." Turtle lied. Glory raised an eye ridge.

"The healers told me they haven't seen you in almost three months. That's why I came, Jambu was wondering where you and Kinkajou were." Turtle shifted uncomfortably. *Damnit! Why do I have to be so bad at lying! I. Am. So. Dead. Oh moons, what do I do!* Turtle thought. Glory walked up in front of him. "A sprain can't last that long, and besides, Jambu said he didn't remember treating you for anything in the last year. So we checked the records, but they didn't mention you either. What's going on?" At that point, Turtle had a small panic attack. Everything blurred and he accidentally dropped one wing

just enough that Queen Glory saw the edge off the egg over it. She stiffened and ducked around the talon he put out to stop her. Then she flew over his head and landed on the other side of the egg. Glory gasped and her eyes widened. Her scales turned every colour at once, from blue to red to black to *pink*. Turtle shrank back. The egg undeniably held a hybrid. The shell faded through every shade of green a Seawing could be, and a few streaks of blue as well. Glory's mouth opened and then she suddenly snapped her head up.

"Who's egg is this?" She demanded in a dangerous tone. Turtle backed away slowly. "I SAID, *WHO'S EGG IS THIS?"* She yelled, red and black overtaking most of her scales. Turtle shook with fear and finally managed to choke out an answer.

"M-mine your Majesty." Glory stepped carefully over the egg and stood nose to nose with Turtle.

"Yours and who's?" She asked dangerously.

"M-mine and K-K-Kinkajou's?" Turtle whispered fearfully. Glory roared in fury. *Oh crap. This is how I die isn't it?* Turtle had time to think before Glory lunged at him. He escaped by a millimetre and shot out the door and into the sky. "KINKAJOU!!!" He screamed "HELP YOUR QUEEN IS TRYING TO KILL ME!!!" Glory was right on his tail, and he dove into the leaves. When he landed on the forest floor he looked around, panting. Glory had vanished. *Shit. She's camouflaged.* Turtle bolted off through the trees, finally stopping when he got to the Animus shack, where Anemone was talking to Tamarin. Glory was following closely behind. She was still invisible, but flying too fast to be silent. Turtle barrelled into Anemone, who yelped, then realised who it was.

"Turtle! What brings you-"

"Glory... egg... angry... HELP!" He panted. Anemone gave him a worried glance as he scooted behind her, then Glory burst out of the forest in full blood red streaked with bolts of midnight black.

"WHERE IS HE!?!" She roared. She spotted Turtle's tail, and lunged at him, but then slammed into an invisible wall and bounced off. She stumbled, then fell down. Tamarin gasped. Turtle had made a

necklace to restore her sight as a wedding present, and Tamarin ran over to see if her Queen was alright.

"What in the MOONS was that all about Turtle? Also, you owe me one. Queen Glory can now only go near you if she does not intend to attack you." Turtle gasped for breath.

"First of all: *Thank you*. I can almost guarantee that I would not be alive right now if it weren't for that spell. As for what that was all about, well let's just say Glory apparently does not ship Turtlejou." Anemone made an apologetic face at Turtle.

"So she found the egg?" Turtle nodded.

"Yeah, She was not too pleased."

"I suppose she must be protective of Kinkajou." Tamarin spoke up from the corner. Turtle nodded.

"*Very* protective." Anemone put in. Glory groaned and sat up, rubbing the back of her head. Turtle carefully slunk over into her line of sight. Glory growled.

"Hey... can we have a reasonable discussion about this? Please?"

Glory glared at him venomously. "We'll see." Was all she said.

An hour later, they were back at Kinkajou and Turtle's tree hut, and everything had been explained to Kinkajou.

"Well?" Glory huffed. "I'm waiting for an explanation here." Turtle, Anemone, Tamarin and Kinkajou shared a look. Then, Turtle took a deep breath and started to explain.

...

The small roomful of dragons stared intently at the egg. Three cracks already ran down the sides. In the room were Tamarin, Anemone, Turtle and Kinkajou (of course), Queen Glory, Qibli and Moon. Deathbringer was at the Rainwing "Palace", guarding his and Queen Glory's egg. Turtle's egg rocked a little and cracked one more time. Then a small chunk of eggshell fell off and the egg rocked

again. Kinkajou reached out and touched the egg lightly. It cracked again where she touched it and she drew back. Then, with one last shove from the dragonet, the eggshell caved and revealed a tiny female hybrid. She had green scales, slightly brighter than Turtle's, and the basic build of a Seawing. She had the webbed talons and glow-in-the-dark stripes, but her wing membrane lacked the glowing swirls of Seawings. She also had Rainwing spikes and the Rainwing nose spike. Kinkajou reached out carefully and tickled the little dragon. Turtle gave her a quizzical look.

"It's a tactic to see how much Rainwing is in a hybrid dragonet. Trust me, just watch." She explained quickly, still tickling the dragonet. Suddenly the little dragon squealed and her wing membranes, spikes, talon webs and glowing stripes turned pink.

"Awwwwww!" Everybody in the room cried simultaneously. Even Glory turned a bit pink at her talons. Then they all looked to Kinkajou and Turtle.

"So, what are you gonna name her?" Anemone asked.

...

Turtle yawned and lifted his wing off his mate and dragonet. The dragonet shivered and cuddled closer. Kinkajou raised her head groggily and gave Turtle a kiss. They left the hammock to make breakfast, and the dragonet squeaked.

"Turtle, can you take her outside?" Turtle nodded.

"I'll try to think of a name too." Kinkajou grinned.

"Yeah, that was pretty darn awkward last night, cause we didn't have a name for her." Turtle sighed and lifted his daughter from the hammock. She perched on his shoulder and bounced slightly, spreading her wings to the fullest. Then Turtle took off, and she squeaked with fear and wrapped her wings around Turtle's neck. He laughed and swooped to the ground. The little dragonet looked around tentatively, as if she expected to be thrown off at any second, but she finally unraveled herself from Turtle's neck and attempted to flutter to the floor. Instead, she face planted into a pile

of leaves, and sat up with little dewdrops clinging to her face.

"Aww, you've got some dewdrops on your chin, here let me help you sweetheart." Turtle cooed softly to his tiny dragonet.

Wow, she's so cute... wait a second! Turtle leapt into the air and roared up to Kinkajou.

"I've got it! I've got the perfect name!" Kinkajou's head popped out of the window. Suddenly the dragonet, who had climbed up Turtle's tail, clambered onto his head, looked up at Kinkajou and called out in her adorable little dragonet voice.

"Dewdrop!"

A/N

Please tell me in the comments of this part or the previous part which ship flashback you would like next. I have finished or almost finished a few of them, but I don't know which order you guys want them in. If I finish all the ships flashbacks before anyone comments, I'll just go ahead and post them in a completely random order.

Flashback (Glorybringer)

Glory swooped back into her hut, landing loudly on the floor. To Deathbringer's sleeping ears, it sounded like a small earthquake, and he leaped out of his hammock, instantly awake. He immediately reached for his bag of chakrams and daggers around his neck, before realising it was only Glory. Her scales were fixed in a hard, angry looking black with red, reminding Deathbringer of the boiling volcano, waiting to erupt. He quickly closed the door behind her and lead her to her hammock.

"Ok, what's wrong? What happened? Who do I need to kill?" **A/N I actually say this to my friends when I see them upset. I am a *very* overprotective friend.**

Glory made a sound halfway between a snarl and a sigh. "Turtle. And Kinkajou. And Anemone." She growled. Deathbringer wrapped a wing around her back and started giving her a shoulder massage.

"Calm down, tell me what happened." Glory sighed, waves and ripples of blue and greenish yellow seeped through the volcanic fury in her scales. Then she inhaled deeply and stared into Deathbringer's eyes.

"Anemone.. She enchanted Kinkajou to have Turtle's egg." Glory explained with a slight tone of anger. Deathbringer gaped, eyes as wide as the moons. Then, he remembered something, and a sly smirk slid onto his face. Glory instantly noticed. "No, stop thinking what your thinking, I can tell from that face that it's bad!" Deathbringer smirked wider. Glory sighed again, then gave in. "Ok fine, what is it?"

"Well... you did say something once... I remember it a bit along the lines of... We can have dragonets when Turtle and Kinkajou do." Glory froze. Then she twisted her neck to look at Deathbringer.

"What did you just say?" She hissed dangerously. Deathbringer grinned as if he hadn't even heard her.

"So, what do you say?" He asked cheerfully. Glory have him a contemplative look, then sighed.

"Fine." Glory sighed, rolling her eyes.
Deathbringer gave her a stunned look. Glory smirked at his dumbfounded expression. He opened and closed his mouth a few times, then finally managed to choke out a few words.

"Y-you're joking... Right?" Glory gave him a smug grin and shook her head. Deathbringer stared at her for a few more seconds and then let a smirk slide onto his face. "I didn't think it would be *that* easy to convince you." He said slyly, pushing his snout right up to Glory's. Glory laughed and pushed his face sideways, resulting in Deathbringer falling on his snout. "Owwww." He whined, rubbing his sore face. Glory laughed again, her laughter tinkling like bells in a serene, silent wasteland, bringing hope and joy. Then, Glory started laughing so hard that she had to lean on Deathbringer's arm to stay standing. She finally stopped, gasping for breath.

"Death... Deathbringer... did it... ever occur... to you that... there... might be a... particular reason? That I said yes?" Glory gasped between pants and laughs. Deathbringer gave him the most confused expression he could muster, hoping she would just tell him. She shook her head with a sly grin when she saw his half pleading, half confused face, before bursting into giggles again. "Use that big head of yours for once." She teased, knocking gently on his head. Her scales were as yellow as bananas with streaks of every colour in a morning glory, from the stem to the petals, zigzagging across her wings, back and tail. Deathbringer was extremely startled. Glory rarely changed these particular hues. The secret must be a really good one or a really funny one. He gave Glory his most pleading look. She rolled her eyes and sighed, shaking her head. "Fine. I'll tell you. Party pooper." She made a hmph noise and pouting face as Deathbringer laughed. "The reason I said yes is... because I'm already pregnant with your dragonets." Glory revealed. Deathbringer looked at her for a moment, eyes as wide as the moons, and then fainted and face planted into the ground. Glory sighed, and started laughing again as Deathbringer started snoring. Glory shook her head, then took a blanket off her hammock and put it on his back. Then she pulled part of it over herself, and went to

sleep next to her mate.

Flashback (Lynxter)

Winter woke to a soft knocking on his door. He rolled over on his rock shelf and groaned. Then he heard the knock again, and his mind cleared enough to realise that it meant a dragon was waiting outside. He jumped off the rock shelf, turned around and called over his shoulder. "Just a minute!" Then he splashed some water on his face from the bucket by his rock shelf to look presentable and opened the door. To his surprise, it wasn't one of the other dragons who lived in Sanctuary, the ones who were involved in making the scavenger studying area. They called him most days because he had owned a pet scavenger and built an area for it to live. Instead, standing in his doorway was a dragon he had thought he would never see again. "L-Lynx..." He stammered, eyes wide. Lynx. The one Icewing he had been sad to leave behind. The only thing that had made him consider living in the Ice kingdom after Darkstalker was defeated and Moon had chosen Qibli. Suddenly, Winter wished he had spent a little more time cleaning his face. And his room.

"Was I interrupting anything?" Lynx asked, peering over his shoulder into his room. Winter's face turned so blue it looked more the colour of the sky than of the ice. *My room is a* mess*! Three moons, she's going to think I'm super messy.* It was true, Winter's stuff was strewn across the room. There were moth eaten specimens of scavenger's skins and a few chunks of wall from a scavenger den in random spots, not stored properly at all. He quickly stepped forward and closed the door behind him, but this resulted in his face being only a millimetre away from Lynx's when she turned her head back. They both turned the colour of the sky, and just stared into each other's eyes. Finally, Lynx stepped back, attempting to end the awkwardness. Winter tried to as well.

"So, what brings you here to Sanctuary?" Winter tried. Unfortunately this was the wrong question. Lynx's face turned so blue that it almost hid the little blue freckles on her snout. Winter shuffled his talons awkwardly. They just stood there for a few minutes, Lynx trying to regain composure of her face, and Winter

trying to figure out what was making her so embarrassed. Finally she spoke.

"It's Snowfall- sorry, it's *her royal Majesty Queen Snowfall of the Icewings.* That what she insists everyone call her, even dragons in the very very high first circle. And she promotes and demotes dragons on a whim. She ordered me to go out and catch her a seal one day, *in the middle of me teaching a class who she had ordered me to teach!* I told her just that, and she nodded, and went outside. Then, the next morning, I was walking through the halls and every time I passed a dragon they attacked me with their tails or claws, apparently for not bowing." Lynx stopped and moved her wings to show the fresh scars all along her flank. Then she dipped her head to the ground to show Winter the streaks of dark blue dried blood on her neck. Winter gasped and curled his claws into the ground. Twin flames of pure fury danced in his eyes. Outside, he was looking at the little tears in Lynx's wing, but inside, he was imagining attacking Snowfall and breathing frostbreath up her over entitled snout. And then tying her wings together and throwing her in the NightWing volcano. Suddenly, Lynx continued. "That's the worst part, she doesn't even care how any dragon in fifth circle or below is treated, and if you are under fifth circle, you are not permitted to go to the healers. Of course, I didn't know that yet, and I thought I was still in first circle. So naturally, I fought back. It seems that Snowfall *really* hates me for some reason. Anyways, I was at high sixth circle, and she put me all the way down to the bottom rank for "attacking a dragon of higher rank unprovoked." Of course, I was furious and tried to argue with her. Then she got mad because she couldn't punish me anymore, and didn't have enough evidence to fairly put me in prison. Then, I don't know how much digging it must have taken her, but she finally found something that could send me to the depths of the ice dungeons for the rest of my life." Winter tilted his head to the side.

"What did *you* do that would be dungeon-worthy?" He asked. Lynx looked away.

"I-I don't want to talk about it... not where other dragons can hear..." She sighed. Winter nodded.

"Wanna come inside?" He asked. She nodded.

"That's the other thing... I kinda got almost captured by the Queen's guards and can't really go back to the Ice Kingdom so I was wondering ifyouwouldn'tmindmestayingatyourhouseforawhilemaybe?" Lynx said in a rush. Winter blinked for a moment, processing what she had said, then had to use all his years of composure training not to grin more goofily than Qibli.

"Of course!" He opened the door "Let me just clean up a little first..." He said sheepishly. Lynx laughed. Her laughter sounded like the dripping of quickly melting icicles, echoing joyfully over miles of flat tundra. Winter had to stop himself from hugging her. She was the only good thing that had ever come from the Ice Kingdom. Winter instead busied himself with putting everything back in it's rightful place and once he was done, finally saw the problem.

"Oh crap...." He whispered. Apparently he hadn't whispered quietly enough, because Lynx looked up.

"What's wrong?" She asked silkily. Winter could never quite find the right adjective for it, but when she was worried, Lynx's voice became... well it felt like being wrapped in cool layers of silk blankets to listen to. Winter turned to look at her, blushing.

"Uhh, I just realised, I only have one rock-shelf bed. And the stone is rather rare, it's a type that holds cold in easily, so it takes a few days to order a new one, and another couple days to get someone to attach it to the wall..." Lynx's eyes widened with understanding and she shifted her wings awkwardly.

"I can sleep on the floor?" She suggested. Winter looked startled.

"No, no, if anyone is going to sleep on the floor, it's going to be me. I'm more used to the weather here anyways. Lynx wrinkled her snout, as if trying to find some comeback to that, but failed.*

Suddenly, a loud bell rang. Lynx tilted her head curiously.

"What's that for?" She wondered aloud. Winter held up a talon, flew around to the back of his house, and dove into the lake. A few moments later, he returned dripping wet. Lynx looked extremely

confused. "Why in Pyrrhia would you do that?" She asked. Winter blushed, realising, a little too late, how strange his morning schedule may look to an outsider.

"Oh, well, that bell is the work call. I have a job helping to make the Scavenger Sanctuary and Research Centre. And as for why I jumped in the lake, A, it's too hot out, and B, I have an all-Icewings-are-mystically-always-perfectly-clean-and-shiny stereotype to uphold." Lynx giggled. Winter walked inside, and with a flourish of his wing announced, "Since I will be out all day, the room is yours." He lowered his voice. "Just try not to break anything, I'm keeping some of the exhibits for the Scavenger Museum in here." Lynx burst out laughing at his tone, and had to lean on his shoulder until she caught her breath. Winter helped her over to the rock shelf, both of them still laughing. Then he waved goodbye, and was already out the door when he remembered something. "Oh and Lynx, if you get too hot, you are welcome to use the lake out back." Lynx nodded, still trying to regain composure of her face, and Winter soared away.

...

Winter arrived back at his house just before sunset, with a dead grizzly bear in his talons. Lynx was out back, letting the ice cold lake water slide over her wings. The small dark blue spots on her body glinted like sapphires. *I guess I always fall for dragons with oddly coloured scales.* Winter thought with a mixture of new love and joy and the old, familiar, crushing disappointment that Moon had chosen Qibli. And not even visited once. *Three moons, I just realised that Qibli kept in better contact with me than Moonwatcher did. He at least visited four times and sent me a letter once every two months for a year with a bit of news. I haven't made contact with him at all this year though, and a bit of last year too. I wonder if he and Moon are alright.* Winter snapped himself out of his thoughts as Lynx finally noticed him and climbed out of the icy water, shaking droplets off her wings onto him. She stood there and sort of... preened was the best way to describe it. She ran the dry part of her mouth over each part of her wings to wipe the water off. Then she turned and faced Winter.

"What are you thinking about?" She asked. Winter blushed slightly,

embarrassed that his new crush had just indirectly asked him about his old crush and her boyfriend.

"Oh, umm, I was just thinking about... an old.... friend who hasn't contacted me in a long time." *And his girlfriend.* Winter's mind added. Lynx nodded and gently tugged on Winter's wing with her own. She pulled him up to the door and grinned.

"Voila!" She exclaimed, flinging the door open. Winter gaped. Somehow, she had gotten rid of all the dust and crumbled dirt that Winter had tracked in between his claws. And, the floor, which had once been so covered in sharp little knobs of rock that Winter was almost glad for the dust, was now as smooth and sleek as Lynx's scales. Not a single pointy object lay on the floor. All the Scavenger exhibits had been placed perfectly upright, the edges parallel to the edge of the shelves. The scavenger pelts were colour coded, from black, to brown, to white, to the odd, unnatural looking pink and blue. Winter just stared for a moment, before Lynx twisted her neck so she was staring into Winter's eyes upside down, still grinning. Winter closed his mouth, and hugged Lynx. She hugged him back, flipping her head the right way around. Then they stepped carefully inside, walking through the only other door in the house, the one the lead to the dining room. Winter dumped the grizzly bear on the table and pushed up one of the stone stools for her to sit on. Lynx examined the grizzly bear for a moment. She ran a claw slowly through the fur, squinting as if trying to remember something. *Oh no, she must not like it, three moons, I'm an idiot, of course she won't like it, it's not even something that lives* near *the Ice Kingdom.* Winter fretted. Slowly Lynx turned to him, still with that slightly confused expression on her snout. The one where her mouth was twisted to one side, highlighting the dark blue freckles on one side, while hiding them on the other. One of her sapphire blue eyes was half closed and her head was tilted. If Winter hadn't been so nervous, he would have found her expression comical. Finally, Lynx spoke.

"Is this the same thing the Scavenger skins are made of?" She wondered, rubbing a bit of the grizzly fur between her claws. Winter stared at her, astonished. It had taken him and the research team months to identify what each kind of Scavenger pelt was made

of. And Lynx had figured out one of the materials in *less than a day*. Lynx stared back at him.

"Well? Am I right?" She asked with a touch of impatience. Winter nodded quickly.

"Well, sort of." Lynx raised an eye ridge, questions dancing in her eyes. "What I mean is, some are made of grizzly fur, but some are made of other things, like boar hide, rabbit fur, lots of things really." Winter quickly defined Lynx nodded with understanding then looked down at the bear.

"So... this is a.... What was it? A grizzly bear?" Winter nodded definitively. Then, he noticed it was getting dark. He grabbed two candles from the perfectly organised shelf beside him, and lit them with a match, one of the newest inventions of the NightWing investor who lived on the other side of Sanctuary. Lynx's eyes widened when she saw the dripping candle wax. She turned to Winter, gaping.

"Is that safe?" She snapped. "Is that safe in any way, shape or form?" Winter jumped, startled.

"Well, there aren't any moon globes here, so fire is the only thing we can use. And besides, if something starts burning we can frostbreath it." Lynx looked conflicted for a moment, then sighed, resigned.

"Well, I trust you, so I guess if it hasn't destroyed anything yet... but still... it gives me a some traumatic flashbacks from the war..." Winter jumped to his talons and quickly lifted the candles off the table, putting them behind the doorway to the main room. Now a faint glow filled the room, but the candles were out of sight. Lynx smiled and twitched her wings like she was just holding back from hugging him. Winter noticed this and changed the subject so she would stop looking so uncomfortable.

"So... What was the thing that Snowfall... that you were almost put in prison for?" Lynx looked scared for a moment, but then inhaled deeply and sighed. She looked away, curling her claws in.

"I-I'm umm..." Winter leaned forward.
"ImayormaynotbeaquarterNightwing." She muttered, staring intently at her talons.

"Sorry, can you say that a bit louder please?" Winter pressed.

"I'm a quarter NightWing." Lynx admitted. "That's where these markings come from." She gestured vaguely at the blue freckles and scales on her face and neck, and the ones on her wings. Winter had never noticed before, but her wing-marks were mostly on the underside, kind of like a NightWing's star scales. Winter took her chin in his talons and lifted it so she was looking at him. Fear sparkled in her eyes like a glacier from miles away. This must have been a secret she had kept her whole life, always terrified that it would come out, and everyone would hate her. Winter knew he had to say something to confirm that he didn't hate her for it. He didn't really know where it came from, but he said one simple thing.

"Well, I guess I always fall for NightWings."

*** LOL, I spelled failed incorrectly and it autocorrected to Deathbringer failed. We now know what my iPhone thinks of Deathbringer.**

Flashback (Cleril)

A/N
I dare you to try and find a way that this is not physically possible. I have thought out almost everything that could be impossible about these dragonets and altered them accordingly.

The large egg rocked for a third time as the two dragons held their breath. The egg was red, framed against a beautiful sunset. Two cracks split through the egg at once, on different sides. Peril shuffled closer to Clay, nervous. *I'm going to be a mother. I'm going to be a mother. Three moons I don't know how to do this! What if...* a million different scenarios flashed through her head where she ruined the dragonets life, either by being a firescales or just being herself. Clay seemed to sense her distress and wrapped a wing around her. The egg rocked one last time, then split into *three*. The two new parents stared in confusion. Clay and Peril started walking over to the outer two pieces of eggshell, thinking that the middle piece was too small to hold a dragonet. A small squeak stopped them. In the middle of the pile of the eggshell's middle pieces, a small, greyish-brown dragonet lay. Peril's eyes widened. The dragonet was so incredibly *tiny*. How could she, the dragon who killed everything she touched, and Clay, the dragon who was admittedly rather clumsy, take care of this miniature dragon. The dragonet's scales were sort of speckled, so it looked like she had been rolling in pale grey dust. The rest of her body was a muted brown colour, nearly overwhelmed by the speckles. Clay gently lifted her out of the piles of eggshell onto the ground. The dragonet squeaked happily, then promptly fell onto her face. Peril turned to Clay.

"How about Ash?" She suggested. Clay nodded, still transfixed on his dragonet. Suddenly, a small growl, then a roar came from behind Peril. She spun around and saw *two more* dragonets fighting in the shattered eggshell parts. One was a male, and the other a female. The female was an eye-scorching shade of deep, vibrant red,

with a reddish orange underbelly and wings. She looked more Skywing then the male and Ash put together. Huge wings, tall, thin. She even had the Skywing spikes, wing membrane and horns. Peril scanned the dragonet for and signs of Mudwing. She finally found that the dragonet's head was slightly thicker than a Mudwing, and her horns were brown hued. The other dragonet, the one she was fighting, looked more like a Mudwing. He had the horns, body type and scales of a Mudwing, but his wings were a bit too large and his claws were a bit too elegantly curved. Unlike the female dragonet however, no one could mistake him for a non hybrid. His scales were a startling shade of very pale *pink*, making him look more like an Icewing hybrid than a Skywing hybrid. The red dragonet kept attacking the pink one, and oddly, it seemed like she was a firescales. But that wasn't the odd part. The odd part was that she kept pulling her talon away after touching him, as if he had somehow made it cold, and the burn mark seemed less to fade then to be sucked into him. Then, Peril heard a small roar from behind. She turned just in time to see Ash roar up to the twin moons, wings spread. Peril visibly paled when she saw Ash's wings. Normal wings were about as large as the dragon they were attached to, minus the tail. (**A/N I actually studied every single book cover to see wing lengths in proportion to their bodies. Skywing wings are actually larger, they are as big as the dragon + about half the tail.)**
Normal wings had three fingerlike bones from the centre of the top arch, and one at the first bend in the wing. Ash's wings looked *nothing* like that. Her wings had only one bone going down from the top arch, and the wings were only the size of her head. Peril instantly knew she would never fly. Clay saw it too, and the look of sympathy he gave the dragonet made her want to cry. She stepped over to Clay.

"So... what do you want to name the other two?" She asked. Clay lit up a bit, the torch that was his spirit flaring happily.

"I have one!" Peril leaned forward expectantly. "How about Chill for the pink one, because he looks like an Icewing?" Peril nodded.

"Chill, Ash and... lets see if any of them have firescales." Clay looked quizzically at her.

"How would I figure that out?" Peril facetaloned.

"You have fireproof scales Clay. Just touch them all. And while your at it, get Chill and his sister to stop fighting. Clay nodded dutifully and placed a talon on both Chill and the unnamed female. He jumped back, wincing, and Peril saw a burn mark fading off his talon.

"Yeowch!" Clay shouted. "Our dragonet burns hotter than you do!" Peril was started. In all the nightmare scenarios she had of ruining her dragonets' lives, she had never even *thought* of one of them being a firescales that burned even hotter than she did. It made her feel odd, knowing that there were now two firescales dragons in the world, and the other was her responsibility. Suddenly, she thought of the perfect name for the dragonet.

"How about Scorch?" Clay nodded thoughtfully.

"Yeah, that works. Oh and the strangest thing, Chill's scales are the exact temperature of the air up here." Peril gaped.

"Are you sure? It's like, freezing up here!"

"Well, maybe if we put him next to Scorch he'll warm up." Peril frowned.

"Fine, but we have to make sure they don't attack each other."

"Wait a sec, won't Chill get burned?" Clay exclaimed. Peril sighed.

"He's clearly fireproof or he would have gotten burned from fighting with Scorch so- Oh my moons Clay! How are we going to know if Ash is fireproof or not?!?" Clay's eyes widened.

"....Was that my job to figure out?" He whispered carefully. Peril facetaloned.

"CLAY!"

Flashback (Ripnami)

Tsunami growled. At the entrance of the cave, Riptide was jabbing a sword at the small assassination squad trying to get into their cave.

"Hey Tsu Tsu? A little help here please?" Riptide yelled.

"Hold up Squid-brain, I'm writing a note to Clay asking for Peril to come help guard our cave, one to Anemone asking her to try to convince mother to stop, and *another* note to mother asking her to PLEASE STOP SENDING ASSASSINS!" She shouted the last part so that the assassins could hear. Riptide panted and managed to hold them off long enough to push a boulder in front of the entrance. It wouldn't stay long, but it was still something. Tsunami lashed her tail when she saw how bruised Riptide was. She handed him the letters.

"Take these to the post office will you? I can take over the punching assassins in the face for a while." She smirked and kissed him. Then she rolled away the boulder in front of the secret back entrance, flew down the tunnel and shifted the other boulder. Then she sat at the back of the room so she could watch her eggs and the boulder in the cave entrance at the same time. A few minutes later, she turned around and closed the back exit boulder tightly. A moment later, she came back to see that the boulder had been shifted just enough for one of the smaller assassins to get in. He was slinking silently along the ground towards her eggs. A boiling fury filled Tsunami and with a roar she pinned the assassin to the hard rock floor and clawed his eyes out before he could even make a sound. The dragon screamed and tried to escape her grasp, and she growled loudly, then snapped his neck. Tsunami winced at the memory of doing the same thing to Gill, her own father. Then she picked up the body and shoved it back through the gap between the boulder and the cave entrance. She heard horrified gasps from the assassins. They weren't really assassins, she knew. They were the Queen's guards. But her eggs... her eggs were worth the world to

Tsunami, and she would kill anyone who got between her and them. She stepped carefully over the bloody patches of floor. She dipped one talon into the pool of drinking water in the cave, which filtered from a source too small for dragons, but big enough for most fish. Tsunami walked over to her eggs and rubbed the little streaks of dried blood from them. Now they shone, one a deep blue, swirling around the shade of sky. The other was a sort of greyish in between colour all the way through. A thump and the pattering of many talons alerted Tsunami that something had changed. She shifted the nest into the back room so they would not be damaged if the fighting got inside. Then she looked through the tiny crack and saw that there was now an *entire platoon* outside her door. Her eyes widened. Then she heard a creaking sound. The whole platoon, maybe fifteen of whom were pushing hard on the boulder. Tsunami pressed her whole weight into keeping the boulder steady, but the soldiers were shoving hard. Finally, she heard the scraping sound of Riptide returning, but before he could get to her, Tsunami finally fell forward, as did the rock. She scrambled to her talons and thwacked a whole row of dragons with her tail. They fell to the sides and Tsunami managed to take the fight outside. Riptide joined in. Just as Tsunami was starting to falter, she saw it. At first it was just a flicker on the horizon. But then it loomed higher. And higher. Tsunami grabbed Riptide's shoulder.

"Get inside." She hissed. "Now, and get ready to close the boulder." Riptide nodded and fell back. Tsunami fought even harder than she thought possible, still retreating backwards, but keeping a safe distance away. Then, she was able to hear it over the roaring of dragons. She quickly dove into the cave and she and Riptide slammed the boulder shut, just as the roaring sound grew intense. The two pushed the boulder hard as their attackers tried to shove back in.

"Whatever you do..." Tsunami panted. "don't... let... go..." The roaring grew deafening and Tsunami gritted her teeth. Jets of water shot out of the crevices where the rock was not covering the entrance and Riptide's eyes widened. When the roaring finally passed, the two were knee deep in seawater. Riptide turned to his mate.

"W-What in Pyrrhia was that!?!" He squeaked. Tsunami grinned at him. Her face was flecked with droplets of water and she laughed.

"It was a tidal wave!" She exclaimed giddily. Riptide cocked his head.

"You mean-" Tsunami cut him off.

"Yes, a tsunami! My namesake saved us!" She laughed. Riptide let out a relieved laugh and hugged Tsunami. Then a resounding *Crack* echoed through the cavern. Tsunami and Riptide froze and stared into each others eyes.

"The eggs." They whispered simultaneously. The two rushed into the back room, expecting to see one or of their eggs crushed by an assassin, but instead they saw one egg rocking, while a small grey-blue talon scraped at a small hole in its shell. As the two Seawings watched, both eggs cracked, and out came two little dragonets. A male and a female. The male was shades of slightly greyish blue, mostly in Tsunami's deep blue, but had sky blue glow in the dark stripes. The daughter had a deep blue back and wings, but a sky blue belly. Her wing membranes were also sky blue. Tsunami wrapped her wing around Riptide and scooted closer to him.

"Aren't they *adorable*?" She whispered softly. He nodded, to entranced by the dragonets to speak.

"What should we call them?" He finally breathed.

"How about we name them after that huge wave that saved us?" Tsunami suggested. Riptide swatted her.

"We are *not* naming both our dragonets Tsunami!" Tsunami rolled her eyes.

"No you squid-brain, a tsunami can be called a tidal wave too." Riptide made an O shape with his mouth. Tsunami walked around to behind the dragonets. "So, meet Tidal," She pointed at the male. "And Wave." She pointed at the female.

Riptide grinned. "Perfect." He proclaimed.

Flashback (Starspeaker)

Fatespeaker lashed her tail nervously, hitting Starflight in the stomach. He doubled over with an "Oof" And Fatespeaker gave him an apologetic look, before facetaloning as she remembered he couldn't see it.

"Sorry Starry." She apologised, wrapping a wing around his shoulder. He nuzzled her and she let go, turning back to the two eggs, shaking in the moonlight. A large CRACK resounded as a wide crack split the top of the smaller egg. Fatespeaker peered at it, and quickly realised that the egg had stopped shaking, as if the dragonet inside had gotten tired. The crack was just wide enough for a tiny streak of moonlight to touch the ebony dragonet, but before Fatespeaker could catch more than a glimpse, a thick cloud passed over the single full moon. She looked up, and saw that it was thick at one end and slowly thinned out into nothingness. Because she was staring into the cloud, she missed the second when the first dragonet hatched. As soon as she heard the sound she whipped around, only to see that her first dragonet, a son, was already stumbling out of the eggshell pieces. She cupped her talons around him, lifting him up to Starflight's face.

"Lo- Come se- Uhhhh... Here! Hold our dragonet." She gently placed the dragonet in Starflight's outstretched talons, and the little dragon stumbled across his claws, reaching out for the clearing.
Fatespeaker giggled.

"How about we name this little one Nightseeker?" She asked Starflight, bopping the tiny dragonet on the nose.
Starflight nodded slowly.

"Yeah, your probably right. After all, you are the one who can see." Starflight chuckled with nervous sadness. Fatespeaker sighed and hugged him, momentarily forgetting about the partially cracked, slowly rocking egg still in the clearing. The clouds started to thin, and just before the cloud would have passed by, the egg shattered into a dozen pieces. Standing in the centre was a small black

dragonet with green undertones and a sliver patch on each eye. Her tiny wings were spread wide, and she had Starflight's outward spraying star scales on the green tinted undersides. Fatespeaker immediately rushed to pick her up. Unlike her brother, she seemed unfazed by leaving the moonlight. Fatespeaker stood next to Starflight, their wings brushing.

"So..." Starflight finally said, breaking the peaceful silence that had descended over the family. "When are we gonna tell the other Dragonets the truth about why we've taken a vacation from Jade Mountain?" Fatespeaker sighed.

"Well, to tell you the truth, I'm a bit worried. You know how Glory reacted when she found out about Dewdrop. And how Tsunami attacked Deathbringer when she was told that Glory was pregnant. And how Peril literally murdered Meer-" Starflight cut her off with a small growl.

"We do not speak of the Meerkat incident." He said solemnly. Fatespeaker nodded slowly, a reluctant expression on her face. Then she shrugged it off and sighed.

"Anyways, my point is that your friends have had some pretty... violent reactions to the "hi by the way I'm pregnant" thing, ya know?" Fatespeaker explained. Starflight hesitated, then sighed.

"I suppose, but, we need to tell them eventually." Fatespeaker nodded, then looked down suddenly as a small voice muttered something. It was the unnamed female dragonet. "Oh, Starflight, what should we name our dragonet?"

"Hmm... maybe-" Starflight was cut off by the tiny dragonet.

"Twuf! Twuth! Truth!" The dragonet called out, staring with her light green eyes up at her parents. "Truth!" She said again.

Starflight laughed. "How about.... Truth... reader. Truthreader!" He proclaimed.

Fatespeaker nodded. "Perfect Starry! Nightseeker and Truthreader. Our dragonets."

Fight club

"What's a fight club?" Flicker asked innocently. Viper and Firefly were practically sweating with nervousness.

"Uhhh.... nothing?" Firefly tried.

Flicker bristled. "It's definitely *something.* And I wanna know what!"

Viper laughed nervously. "You sure about that? Cause... it's not exactly for two year olds." Flicker growled.

"Yes I'm sure! What do you think! Tell me now, or else I'm telling Mommy and Aunty Sunny *and* Daddy *and* Thorn!" Firefly And Viper exchanged a glance, then Firefly tilted her head, closed one eye and shrugged, their secret code for: *tell him/her or do it.* Viper sighed and rolled her eyes. Then she sat down, and motioned for Flicker to sit down next to her. He obeyed, and so she began.

"Fight club is where we go to do extra fighting practice. But instead of fighting each other, we fight big dragons who are super strong. Sometimes, they are so strong that we *lose*. So, not the place for two year olds." Viper explained, trying to sound gentle and understanding, but really just sounding like she was trying to resist biting Flicker's head off. Flicker gave her a contemplative look, then lifted his head.

"I wanna come!" He declared loudly. Firefly opened her mouth to argue, but he cut her off. "And if you don't lemme come, I'ma tell. So lemme come." Firefly's eyes widened and she glanced at Viper. Viper pressed her eye ridges together, screwed up Her mouth like she had eaten a lemon, and raised one eyebrow. This was essentially code for: *should I?* Or *is it worth it?* The two had a fairly intricate language of facial expressions and talon gestures. If they had been Seawings, they would have been fluent in Aquatic by two months old most likely, even if they lived in Kinkajou's or Tsunami's family, as those two families didn't speak Aquatic, or teach it to their dragonets. As it was Firefly sometimes used her colour

changing scales to simulate Seawing's bioluminescent stripes for when she had to say something that the secret language didn't cover. Of course, this only worked on her back half, so sometimes they had to rely on speaking out loud. Rarely though, the two dragons were masters of language, and would spell out words with their talons, or in Firefly's case, scales, before saying something private that other dragons could overhear. The two had even pores over ancient scrolls and secret messages written during the war until they could speak at least fragments of every secret language that had ever been recorded, from Aquatic to Morse code to Shift. Shift was a Skywing language from the war, where the speed and how often the dragon moved their wings or talons or tail represented words. For example, each claw on your right talon was a vowel, and hitting your tail against the ground was a space between words. It seemed to Viper and Firefly that every tribe had a secret language, and they were determined to learn them all. Also, to study how each of them worked and if it was possible for them to use the languages. As far as other tribe languages, they could speak Aquatic, Shift, Scalene, an old Rainwing language from back when they could read, Streak, more of a trail setting strategy than a secret language, made by the MudWings, Venom, another trail type, but words could be used as well, invented by an ancient Sandwing prince and Morse code, which had actually been invented by the NightWings long ago. They knew of the Icewing language, but neither of them had Frostbreath, so they didn't count themselves as speaking it. Viper and Firefly only talked out loud with each other when in a room alone, and talked through gestures occasionally even then. Viper was snapped out of her thoughts by Firefly thrusting her head forward, the signal for: *come on already! We can't wait forever!* Viper sighed in defeat, turning to Flicker's excited face.

"Hmm. Fine, you can come and *watch* just this once if you cross your heart you'll never tell a single dragon. Deal?"
Flicker reluctantly nodded, knowing he wouldn't get a better deal than that out of his older sister and her best friend.

"Fine, that works."

...

After Ex-Queen Scarlet's gladiator arena had been demolished, the

dragons who had enjoyed the fights made a new thing. Fight club. Unlike Scarlet's arena, fight club was not a fight to the death, just to the surrender/passing out, so tail barbs were covered (at least they were supposed to be, but there were stalls of Brightsting cactus just in case) and venom teeth were capped. Fire and frostbreath was prohibited as well, but teeth and claws and wings were allowed. You could also choose if you wanted to fight, and leave the stadium at any time. Some of the Queens were against fight club however, so it was moved around all the time, and the organisation was fairly secret. Firefly and Viper had put Flicker in a seat and then gone to signups. Since they were under seven, fighting as a pair was allowed. They stepped onto the sands and a large portion of the crowd cheered, as they did with most regulars.

"On one side! Viper of the Sandwings and Firefly of the Rainwings and Nightwings!" The announcer called from his perch above the stadium. "And on the other side!" A large Nightwing stepped into the arena. "Deathbringer of the NightWings! Claws up, teeth ready, FIGHT!"

I wont tell if you don't

Firefly gasped. *No. No this can not be happening. Any second now Viper is going to wake me up.* But Viper was standing beside her, jaw practically unhinged. Deathbringer was standing wide eyed and startled on the other side of the sands. Firefly turned lime green from behind her wings down. She even managed to look a little green on her face, but that had nothing to do with being half Rainwing.

Do not puke! Viper signalled hastily when she noticed Firefly's expression.

I'm trying! She communicated by drooping her wings to the ground and looking up. Viper put a wing on Firefly's back and slid it forward, the sign for, *come on already, let's do this. Don't worry, we're in this together.*

It crossed Firefly's mind that they probably looked insane to the dragons watching, so she lifted her wings up and out, then folded them at the top arch, meaning: *stop, they're watching.* Viper nodded, and they walked forward to talk to Deathbringer.

"Heeeey Dad...." Firefly tried.

"You aren't supposed to be here Firefly!" Deathbringer hissed, lashing his tail nervously.

"And you are?" Viper put in, pushing past Firefly. Deathbringer had the dignity to look embarrassed.

"I- I still need to inform your parents." He proclaimed. Viper swept her tail barb against the sand, frustration practically pouring out of her gaze. Deathbringer tried not to look incredibly uncomfortable, but failed. Suddenly a light gleamed in Viper's eye and she lifted her head triumphantly.

"If you tell on us, you'll have to reveal that you were here too, and

I'm sure of exactly how Glory would react to *that* particular news." Viper announced, a challenge in her voice as she took a step closer. Deathbringer sighed.

"Fine. You called my bluff." He admitted. "But this still is not a good idea."

Viper looked around, and as she had expected, Deathbringer spoke a bit too loud, and now most of the stadium was making a low hissing sound at him. Deathbringer shifted uncomfortably, and instinctively reached for his weapons bag, but remembered that he had taken it off at weapon drop off. Viper smirked obnoxiously, a skill she had learned from Deathbringer himself. Deathbringer sighed, snorting the tiniest bit of flame, then gave in.

"Fine. I won't tell Glory if you don't."

"And Sunny? And Thorn? Tell nobody? Promise?" Firefly pressed. Deathbringer rolled his eyes up to the three moons, one half full, one a quarter full and the third just a sliver in the sky.

"Fine. I promise." Deathbringer relented. Firefly nodded, then grinned slyly.

"And if you break your promise, you have to try to teach Coconut and Petal to fight for a week." Firefly snickered. Deathbringer's face lit up in actual alarm. Coconut and Petal had failed out of Deathbringer's training class every year since he made it. Coconut because he was too unenthusiastic, and Petal because she refused to do anything that might possibly get her scales dirty. Which was everything but order other dragons around all day. Petal was actually royalty, believe it or not. She was Jambu's daughter, few years older than Firefly. Jambu and his mate Monarch had an egg less than a year after the war ended, and it hatched ten months after Darkstalker's defeat. She had to be the laziest dragon Firefly had ever met, and the least deserving of the dual tribe throne, but since she was older, she was the first heir to the throne. In front of her, Deathbringer looked like he was begging.

"No, please, not Petal! Anything but Petal! She'll make me polish her scales again! Argh!" Deathbringer begged, widening his eyes so

he looked like a new hatched dragonet. Firefly gave him a contemplative look, then tapped her chin, as though in deep thought.

"I know, just don't tell anyone!" She announced cheerfully. Deathbringer sighed, defeated for the time being.

"Come on, let's go home before your mother notices we're all gone and has a conniption fit." Deathbringer said to Viper. Sunny had become incredibly overprotective of her single dragonet, and refused to let her go near any MudWings or SkyWings during diplomatic visits. Viper had only even seen a Skywing at fight club, but never a Mudwing. They didn't leave the Mud Kingdom often enough to go to fight club in the middle of the night like Firefly and Viper did. Viper nodded quickly, at the same moment Firefly did, and they went to inform the announcer they were going home.

Somewhere in the foothills

Somewhere in the foothills of the Claws of the Clouds mountains, where the mountains met the hot sand desert, a family of MudWings and Skywings lived. Scorch would never understand why her parents had insisted on all her aunts and uncles (or at least, the ones who hadn't gone missing into the depths of Pyrrhia six years earlier.) living with them. It was so much harder to avoid killing anyone when there were *so many dragons around all the time!!!* Her Uncle Reed had several permanent burn scars from when she had gotten overexcited as a dragonet and tried to hug someone, and Reed had intervened. *So, definitely he's* not *my biggest fan. I certainly don't like the lectures that come with touching, well anything really.* Scorch shifted her talons awkwardly on her rock, trying to get the sand off her talons before- too late, it had already melted. She hated the stupid desert. She hated her stupid brother, for needing to live there. Stupid "cold blooded" condition, where the only place warm enough for him to even live was the stupid Kingdom of Sand. They weren't even allowed to live here. Princess Sunny had ordered Clay and Peril's permanent banishment after some fiasco that neither of them would talk about. Apparently some dragon died who wasn't supposed to in a battle. That was all Scorch had been able to figure out. That's why they were living in the foothills of the Claws of the Clouds mountains. Although, Scorch was thankful that they couldn't live *too* far into the Sand Kingdom, and were *technically* living a mile from where the Kingdom officially started, but there was still sand *EVERYWHERE!* Scorch hated sand. She hated it with a passion as strong as her fire. It had nearly killed her once. The first day they came to the Kingdom of Sand, Scorch had fallen asleep in a sand dune. She had awoken over an hour later, drowning in melted glass. She had managed to get her snout out of the surface enough to yell for help. She would definitely be dead by now if she wasn't half Mudwing. She did have the giant Mudwing lungs, as did Chill, since both SkyWings and MudWings had large lungs. MudWings for hiding in the mud, and SkyWings for flying higher than the level any other tribes could breathe at. Her mother had to pull her out, with a bit of reluctant help from Chill,

as they were the only dragons who could touch her without at least extreme pain. Ash had mildly fireproof scales, she wouldn't be scarred by fire, but the burns took a few days to heal, at least when Scorch touched her. With regular fire, the burns only took a few minutes. Ash couldn't get a limb twisted or scorched from fire, but she could get burns, red marks that hurt when touched. Suddenly, Scorch felt a sticky creeping feeling on her wingtips. *Oh no, not* again*! Ugh this is* disgusting. *Revoltingly, purely, nothing but disgusting.* Scorch's wingtips were dripping with sticky, disgusting, melted glass. She had trailed her wingtips in the sand *again.* This always happened whenever she was at home, but she had been grounded, banned from flying to the mountains since she set an entire forest alight. *All I did was flick my wing to shoo a fly away! It's not my fault that a branch was there. Or that the fire spread so fast. Or that there just* happened *to be dragons in there. It's not fair. Chill gets his entire stupid sandy desert, Ash gets... well, Ash doesn't really have a favourite place, but she gets her own room so... And that means it's perfectly fair for me to have some low key places in the Sky Kingdom to hang out. I mean, we are allowed to be there, and we do technically live within the border of the Sky Kingdom.*

"Stupid, stupid, stupid, stupid, *stupid* sand! I hate this!" Scorch growled out loud, trying to get the incredibly sticky melted glass off of her wings. In the distance, she noticed Chill wandering into the desert yet again. *Stupid punishment! Stupid Chill and his stupid desert. I hate them all.*

A/N

In case you hadn't noticed, I'm kinda trying to make Scorch sound like an angsty teenager. So that's why she said "stupid" about three dozen times, because it fits with her personality and world view. Pretty much, she's only really happy in the Sky Kingdom, and has good reason to hate everywhere else she has ever been. (So far at least.... Mwahahahahahaha.... I have big plans for all these characters. Tbh it might not all fit in once book.)

Weapocaching

Princess Sunny and Queen Thorn were very popular royalty among most dragons. Most. There were some however, who despised the idea of a hybrids their princess, and inevitably future ruler. However, Princess Sunny was incredibly well protected, and even Glory had sent some Rainwings to be a top secret invisible guard, in addition to Sunny's regular guards. Queen Thorn was protected by even more guards, and both of them rarely left the stronghold when unnecessary. Viper on the other talon... let's just say she enjoyed long, silent walks in the desert all alone. And got incredibly angry when her peaceful walk was interrupted. To put her mother's mind at rest, she had done extra training and carried a knife strapped to her ankle everywhere.

Another thing she did was a little more of a memory game then a safety precaution, but it still counted. The other thing was what she called weapocaching. Viper had heard from Firefly about a game Rainwings played called geocaching. One group of Rainwings would hide a box with a few objects, and then put the general location on a map. At some point, another group of Rainwings would go and find it. Then each dragon would take something, and replace it with something of their own. Weapocaching was that but without the other dragons. Viper would lift large rocks, dig a hole underneath and put one of each kind of weapon she owned at the time in them. That way, if she was attacked, all she needed to do wais simply flip over a rock and grab some weapons. Every once in a while, Viper would go weapocaching for a few hours. Her goal was for every rock bigger than her talon to have a small arsenal of weapons underneath it.

Today, she was placing a few bags of Rainwing darts, a present for her recent fourth hatching day. Oddly, her mother hadn't given her anything yet. Viper finished packing the Rainwing darts, and whisked through the halls of the Sandwing Stronghold, waving to everyone she passed. They simply waved back, used to their Princess running off with a sack of new weapons. Nobody except

Queen Thorn, Princess Sunny, King Smoulder and Princess Firefly knew what exactly happened to the obscene amount of deadly objects, but none of them minded. Well, Sunny minded a little bit. Ok a lot, she had once sent soldiers to follow Viper into the desert, but one had gotten too close and "accidentally" gotten stabbed. Sunny hadn't sent any more guards after that.

Viper took off, then pulled out her large map of the rocks with and without weapons. She chose one near the Skywing border that needed some darts, Skywings were easiest captured with blowguns, since they could fly out of range fast. One of the many things she had learned in fight club, along with things such as: Icewings had a gap at one point between spikes in their headdress type thing, and when it was touched just the right way, it sent a alert message to the Icewings brain that made them collapse and freeze up for a minute. Most other tribes lacked this weak point, but had other points. For example, Sandwings tail barbs stopped producing poison for a few hours if they were bleeding on the underside of the barb. And Seawings were physically impossible to choke to death, because of their gills, although they could be made to pass out, but after longer time periods then most dragons. Also, this one that had been learned the hard way, if a Rainwing kept its tail straight for more than three days without it even being able to curve normally even for a minute, the Rainwing would get cramps from the tail up. Viper knew her way around a fight, if it came to a live or die battle. Well, unless the opponents were Mudwings or Skywings. She had never been supposed to see either of these tribes, but has managed to catch a glimpse of Skywings in the crowd of Fight club. Viper thumped down onto the sands and shifted the rock. There were a few things down here: A rusty throwing knife, two bottles of spray poison and.. oh. The large rope net had unraveled all the way and was slightly frayed around the edges. Viper would have to get a new one. She unpacked her first bag of darts and put it in with a clean, new blowgun, still wrapped in shiny white cloth. Once the weapons were in the hole, Viper pulled out the rope and started putting it in her bag. Out of her peripheral vision, she noticed a small lizard, sunbathing on a rock. *Maybe I can catch that and bring it back for Mother. I wonder if-*

Viper was cut off by light coloured talons landing on her shoulders,

followed by an inexorable weight.

A/N

From now on I might occasionally add pictures to the top of the chapter, but since I haven't finished all the artwork yet, I may post a chapter and then add art to it a few weeks later. I would do the art first, but I draw on paper then import a scan of the drawing into my art program, but the only person in my family who is tech savvy enough to do that is on a different continent for the next month or so.

And this is precisely why weapons are useful Mother.

Viper immediately rolled onto her stomach and put her back talons above her. As she had calculated, the dragon landed right on them and got the wind knocked out of him. Viper punched him in the face to free one arm and then reached over into the pit to grab a dart. She slid the needle expertly between his scales, and the dragon fell down instantly. Viper struggled for a minute to get his weight off, then pulled the rope from her bag. Maybe it could serve a bit of a purpose. With an effort, she managed to wrap the rope around his body so his wings and front legs were completely immobilised. Then she propped him on his side so that he could speak, but getting up would be tricky. To insure this, she twisted his head around so that his horns stuck into the sand. Then, she took a moment to examine this dragon. It was quite evident he was not a Sandwing, but Viper wasn't sure *what* he was. Upon closer examination, the dragon was actually about Viper's age, maybe half a year younger. He seemed too young to be an assassin, so a spy maybe? The thing Viper's mind always circled back to was species however. The dragonet was white, making her think Icewing, but he had no head spikes, nor did he radiate cold. In fact, the dragonet seemed to be to exact temperature of the desert. He had NightWing spikes on his back, but horns like a Rainwing's or a Seawing's but slightly thicker. The dragonet has a large, Skywing-like chest, tail and talons, but was larger and looked more naturally burly than any Skywing Viper had ever seen. The scales were thicker and wider too, and Viper noticed a tinge of red in the scales, making the dragonet more pink then white. *What the hell is this? Is this... a Mudwing? No, it can't be, Firefly told me they were brown, not this weird pinkish colour. Focus Viper! You need to figure it what he's up to! Maybe I can torture the information out of him. That might work.*

Viper grabbed her weapocaching map, and found the nearest place with a spear. *Should be over.... THERE!* She focused in on the rock she wanted, a few dunes away. Viper quickly fluttered over and

snagged a long spear, stolen- I mean borrowed, from the Royal Armoury. When she got back, the pink dragonet had started snoring. Viper plucked the dart from his scales and read the label.

Sleeping dart, 1 hour.

Warning! Will make anyone injected with it sleep for 1 full hour, maybe more. Not to be used by dragonets age one and below. Sharp objects included, please keep out of reach of one year olds.

So I have to wait an hour. Great, I'll have time to go back to the stronghold and get... Actually, I don't really need anything. Maybe I'll just take a nap. Yeah, that sounds good... Viper thought drowsily as she skunk over to a rock, this one with a large net under it. She placed on top of her prisoner and then lay down on her rock to sleep. *And this is precisely why weapons are useful Mother.* She had time to think before the sleep pressing behind her eyelids overtook her.

Chill

Viper woke to the sound of a dragon roaring furiously a few feet away. She picked up the nearest pebble, and hit the roaring prisoner smack in the face. He stopped roaring. Viper smirked and sat up, twirling her spear menacingly before stabbing the into the ground to lean on. The pink dragonet was glaring at her with the force of a thousand suns. Viper picked up another rock, and hit his head with it just hard enough to make him turn it.

"Good morning sleepy head." Viper yawned, pacing over to the dragon so that her face was an inch from hers.

"I'll say! I've been awake for an hour, unlike *some lazy prison guards I could mention."* The pink dragonet growled, sticking out his tongue. Viper smirked and giggled as the dragonet watched in confusion.

"I'm no prison guard, and this is no prison!" Viper laughed raucously. "You must be a terrible assassin if you can't even recognise your target!" Now it was the dragonet's turn to look confused.

"I'm no assassin, and why would I care about you being dead or alive anyways?" He wondered aloud. Viper cocked her head, confused for a moment, then concluded it must be some bad assassin joke.

"Ha.. ha ha...?" She tried, receiving an even more bewildered expression from the mystery dragonet.

"That wasn't a joke...." He informed her.

Viper sat down and scratched her head. "What assassin- What dragon even, can go to a Kingdom and not recognise the heir to the throne of said Kingdom, even after they've attacked the heir?" The pink dragonet's eyes widened and his face clearly read: *Oh shit I'm gonna die now, aren't I.* He tried to scramble backwards, away from Viper, using just his back talons. Viper was mildly surprised. She

was used to bowing and scraping, or immediately being attacked once she informed a dragon she was the famous Sandwing hybrid Princess. But not this. Never this pure terror, like she saw only when she was midway through killing a dragon. The fear of instant death sparked in this dragon's eyes so brightly, Viper had a hard time not looking away. Frantically, she tried to change the subject.

"So who are you?" She asked, wincing at her slightly-to-dangerous sounding tone. The dragonet scrambled back further, tucking his back legs in a way that looked like he was planning on kicking her if she came so much as a millimetre closer. *So.. wrong question then.* "Uhhh... ummmm.... Don't worry? About whatever you're worrying about? What *are* you worried about anyways?" Viper stammered. She was *much* better at convincing someone she was going to stab them than convincing them she wasn't. Although, this level of fear with even a single threat was unusual. Viper sighed, then gave up on being polite. "You want me to do this the hard way?" The pink dragonet froze. Viper walked up to him, just out of kicking range. "Who are you, what are you and why are you here. Tell me before I make you." The pink dragonet pressed himself to the ground and shuddered.

"Fine. I'm Chill. I'm a Mudwing Skywing hybrid and I'm here because I have a condition where I can't survive cold temperatures. The desert is the only place I can live." Viper scowled at him.

"And why were you afraid of me?" Chill's eyes widened again.

"B-because your M-mother b-b-banished my f-family." Viper stared at him in confusion.

"My mother... *my* mother? Not my grandmother?" Chill nodded. "But the only dragons my mother have ever banished are... Clay and Peril..." Viper trailed off, staring in astonishment at Chill. "They... they're your parents... aren't they... your parents killed my father. Why?" Viper said slowly, trying to process.

"It was an accident." Chill blurted quickly. "Or, at least that's what they told me." Viper sighed, twisting her spear in her talons. Then, without warning, She pointed it at Chill and jabbed it forward.

Sandfight!

Chill screamed, expecting the spear to pierce his scales. It didn't. Instead, the ropes binding him fell away cleanly, releasing the pressure on his wings and chest. His wings flopped out at the relief from the too tight bindings, and Viper snickered loudly as he closed his eyes and let him tongue flop out of him mouth. He opened one eye and sat up, looking indignantly at Viper. She had one wing practically stuffed in her mouth to hold back her giggles. The Mudwing hybrid scrambled to his talons and tried to look dignified. Viper laughed so hard she actually fell on her face.

"Ow." Viper whined, her voice muffled by the sand around her snout. "I wook bike ang offtrich, donf I?"

"Huh? Sorry, can't hear you." Viper glared sideways at him and yanked her head out of the sand.

"I said, I look like an ostrich, don't I?" Chill smirked.

"Well, *now* you don't." Viper swatted a talon full of sand at him. He grinned. "I'm not sure, but I think you *just might* have something on your face." He teased.

"Oh really? Where?" Viper asked, playing along. Chill grinned slyly, then stepped closer. Viper tilted her head slightly, staring at him.

"Well there's here, and here, and here, and here, and here and here." Chill said, pointing to every other inch on her snout. "Here, lemme get that for you." Viper sat back and closed her eyes, expecting him to find something to wipe her face off with. Nope. She felt something wet touch her face, and opened her eyes, startled. Chill was *licking* the sand off her face.

"CHILL!!!" She roared, grabbing a talon full of sand and throwing it at his face. Chill stepped back, feigning looking hurt, then chucked his own talon full of sand. Soon they were both laughing, their faces set in fake concentration as sprays of desert floor flew across the

sand. Around sunset, they called a truce, exhausted, and lay down next to each other by a dune that was still warm from sunlight. Both panted heavily, and Viper's head was rested on Chill's chest. They both dropped off to sleep before their brains had even registered closing their eyes.

Good morning, I'm dead.

Viper woke up to the sound of her name being called.

"Princess Viper? Princess Viper?" She opened her jaws to say *Five more minutes*, then froze. Memories from the previous day soared back, on beautiful pink wings. *Chill. I can't let them find him! They'll kill him.* She looked around, then realised she had been sleeping on top of him. He was bigger, so her head had rested on his shoulder and her tail was stabbed into the ground. *I guess I must've done that in my sleep. Or maybe he just moved my tail? It doesn't matter Viper, the whole stronghold is looking for you.*

"Chill! Chill wake up! You have to get up right now!" She hissed, putting her talons on his shoulders and shaking. She didn't want to wake him up. He looked so peaceful, but if the guards saw him... there would be hell to pay. Chill's eyes snapped open, and instantly filled with panic as he saw Viper's expression.

"What is it? What's wrong?" He whispered, sensing the need to be stealthy.

"My mother. And my grandmother. They've sent guards after me. If they find you, they'll probably kill you on sight. Knowing how my mother was- and still is about my father's death, the probably have orders to kill any Sky-Mud hybrids or Clay on sight. Come on! Let's go!" Viper explained. She rolled off of him and grabbed one of his talons, yanking him to standing and spreading her wings. Then she stopped and face taloned. "We have to walk! They'll see you if you fly. Actually, I should probably stay on your back so you at least *partially* blend in with the sand."

Chill nodded reluctantly and Viper jumped onto his back. He let out an "Oof" but didn't make any other sound. Viper spread her body over his as best she could as he ran.

A few minutes later, they reached the official border to the Sky Kingdom. There was a ground cave nearby and Chill dove into it.

He lay of the ground panting.

"Geh Oof." He mumbled.

"Huh?"

Chill lifted his snout higher. "I said *get off*."

"Oh." Viper obligingly stepped over him into the deeper parts of the cave. "So what now? I can't stay here forever, and I'm assuming your parents are looking for you too." Chill smiled wryly.

"That's the good thing about being in a Mudwing family. I have like, seven other dragons living in my house, and I go out to the desert all. The. Time. I doubt they would notice for at least another day." Viper sighed, tail drooping sadly.

"Well, I guess this is goodbye then." She sighed.

"Not necessarily."

"Hmm?" Viper grunted, tilting her head.

"Meet me here next time one moon is full, as soon as you can get away." Viper's eyes shine and she nodded quickly, before sweeping out the door. She traveled along the ground for a while, then flew near the desert floor to the place she had slept the night before. She lay down in the indentation Chill had made, and tried her best to make it look like she had been the only dragon sleeping there. Then, when she heard her name called again, she replied.

"Princess Viper? Where are you?"

"I'm over here. Wadda ya want?" She called back, trying her best to imitate the slurred speech of a dragon who had just woken up. She faked a large yawn as the guard soared into her line of sight.

"Princess Viper! We've been searching the desert all day! Where were you?"

Viper looked around, feigning confusion, then looked up.

"I guess I must've fallen asleep."

The guard shook his head and sighed.
"You'll have to explain that to Her Majesty unfortunately." Viper froze. *Shit, shit, shit, shit, shit, shit. Oh three moons I'm going to be grounded for a year. Or till I'm seven. Or seventeen. Oh moons.*

A/N

You guys. The Lost Heir Graphic novel just came out and I have it. Excuse me while I proceed to die of excitement.

A desert night walk

Ash sighed, letting her useless wings hang by her sides. She looked up, just as her siblings began fighting again. Over the stupidest thing too, who's turn it was to pick dinner. It was Ash's turn, but everyone had forgotten about that, because it had to do with her. If only she could fly up there and knock some sense into them. Ash was pretty sure she would have been the Bigwings, had she hatched as a full Mudwing. She already had the fierce desire to help her sibs, and subsequently hated it when they fought. Which was every day. Her tail swept across the ground, clearing the dust off the stone floor. *You know what? It's my turn, I'm picking tonight. And since I know they won't stop to listen to me, I'll just have to go catch something myself.*

Ash got to her talons and found a stone slab. She tried to carve some words into it, but the stone wouldn't budge. *Fine then. I'll just have to do it some other way.* Ash glanced over at the small fire they kept, mostly so her mother and Scorch would have somewhere to stand out of the way, where nobody would accidentally walk into them. *Perfect.* Ash reached gingerly into the edges of the fire, wincing, and pulled out a large talon full of ashes. Then she carried them into her room, carefully leaving a thin trail behind her. Then, she deposited the rest of the ashes at the end of the trail and started spelling out words with them.

I am going to catch my own dinner. I should be back by morning.

Ash sat back to admire her handiwork. *There. That way they won't worry.* Ash shook out her talons, trying to get the dust off. Eventually she gave up, realising they would just get more dirty outside. She poked her head around the corner. Scorch had Chill pinned to the wall and was roaring at him, while he kicked at her head and chest. Their aunts, uncles and parents scolded them futilely, while they continued fighting.

"WHY WERE YOU OUT ALL NIGHT!" Scorch roared. Ah. So they

were fighting about something else now. Ash remembered this, Chill has gone out the day before and not come back all night. Everyone was frantically rushing about, looking for him. Sometimes Ash was jealous of Scorch. She was the only one who wasn't in constant danger whenever on her own.

"I already told you. None of your business." Chill said, with an air of calmness, but there was a slight touch of.. something different. Ash tilted her head. Was that *fear* she saw glinting in her brother's eyes? Wasn't that the same tone her father used when someone went missing? The, I'm actually super worried but I'm faking calmness tone. There was also something... inherently different about her brother since he had returned that morning. It looked almost like there were... smile wrinkles around his eyes, and his scales were slightly darker pink then before, the way they only got when he had been warm for a long period of time. But that couldn't be right, the desert was cold at night, and any place near it was even colder. But he did definitely look pinker, especially on one shoulder and his stomach. *What did he do, lie on his back all day? And get someone to make a fire for him, and sit facing it all night? That's an odd thing for him to do.* Anyways, she could ponder over it later. She already had a few working theories, but she would need further evidence.

Ash waited until a moment where nobody was watching the doorway, then quickly slipped out into the desert. The cooling night breeze refreshed her, and she felt ready to spread her wings and fly to the moons. She almost tried. She lifted her wings, but then saw them from the corner of her eye and quickly folded them again, embarrassed at being so caught up in the moment. Instead, she set out across the desert.

Ash walked for hours, but didn't see anything worth eating. Eventually, she was almost within sight of Queen Thorn's Stronghold. *I should probably stop here. I don't want to get spotted.* Ash yawned and stretched, not looking forward to the walk back, and so she didn't notice the wind picking up until it swept her off her feet. She stumbled, tripped and fell. Instead of hitting the ground, the sand she landed on collapsed and she fell into a cold, dark tunnel.

The Rainforest

Ash yelped, landing hard on one foreleg and rolling a few feet down the tunnel. Then she stood up and looked around. She had two choices. Try her best to climb out of the tunnel and go home, or explore. It was too tempting to even be a choice. Ash galloped down the tunnel, excitement and curiosity lending new speed to her talons. Finally, she burst out into the most beautiful place she had ever seen. Tall trees towered overhead, shielding her with long flat leaves with the richest green she has ever seen. A small waterfall gurgled into a nearby pond, and birds chirped happily in the trees. Everything everywhere was either green and leafy or covered in mud. Ash had only ever seen mud smeared on her aunt's and uncle's scales from when they visited the Mud Kingdom. Bright colourful fruit covered everything, and birds of paradise swooped left and right, as though beckoning Ash to follow them. *This must be the Rainforest. I've always wanted to go to the Rainforest.*

Ash leaped off through the trees joyfully and explored. She pounced on monkeys and rustled bushes and poked her snout into *everything.* She was leaning over a bush at the base of a tree, when she tripped and fell face first into it. The bush shook and leaves snapped, and Ash let out a muffled "owww." Then she wriggled her head free, looked up, and saw a Nightwing staring at her.

"Who are *you*?" The thin black female asked coolly. Ash froze and stared into the dragon's eyes.

"Uhh... I'm Ash?"

Truthseeker

A/N
I forgot to say in the last part that during this whole conversation "The NightWing" is sitting on a large tree branch, and Ash is sitting in a bush next to the tree's trunk.

The black dragon furrowed her brow for a moment, then nodded slightly.

"And why are you here?"

"Err.. I fell? Into a tunnel? And it lead here?" It sounded to her like a lie, although she knew it was the truth. She hoped the dragon wouldn't like, take her to the dungeon for suspicious activity or something. Although, this dragon seemed fairly young, only about three or four. *She's my age.* Ash realised.

Fortunately, the dragonet nodded again, and Ash started to wonder if she could convince this dragonet that she was supposed to be here.

"I uhh, I decided to move here, and I happened to fall through the tunnel, so now I don't have to wal- to umm to fly all the way here." The black dragonet raised an eye ridge at her and frowned.

"Why are you hiding in that bush? Why don't you fly up here? What are you hiding? And tell me the truth this time, Ash." The NightWing challenged. Ash quickly thought up a good lie. She didn't particularly want this strange dragon, who was now glaring at her, to know that she was utterly defenceless.

"I'm stuck. I can't fly up there." This got a different reaction out of the strange dragon. She looked puzzled, like she was wondering why Ash had said what she said. She opened her mouth, then closed it again. Finally, she responded.

"I don't know why you keep lying to me, but if you're not stuck,

why can't you fly up?" Ash's face must have looked scared, because the NightWing chuckled and seemed to understand. "Oh don't worry, I would never hurt an injured dragon. Or any dragonet, hurt or not. Well, not unless they *really* deserved it. Like, if they hurt Nightseeker or something, and they were old enough to know better." Ash glanced around, then finally burst out.

"I can't go up there because I can't fly!" The NightWing froze.

"You can't fly?" Ash nodded, waiting for the onslaught of taunting that she had received from any dragon who saw her. The Nightwing's answer surprised her though. "That means our meeting isn't chance, it's destiny!"

"Huh?" Ash was thoroughly confused. "Destiny?"

"My brother? Nightseeker? He's a prophet and had a vision of the two of us helping a flightless dragon fly!" Ash was taken aback.

"Uhhh, are you *sure?* Cause, with my wings, I don't think me flying is physically possible." The NightWing rolled her eyes and swooped down to the forest floor.

"Cmon out, let me see those wings. Oh, by the way, I'm Truthreader." Suddenly a thought occurred to Ash.

"Are you a mind reader?" Truthreader made a not-quite-sure face and shrugged.

"Well, not exactly. I hatched halfway under a cloud, but with one full moon, so I can't read minds, but I can tell if a dragon is lying or telling the truth." Truthreader explained.

Ash made an O shape with her mouth. "So *that's* how you could tell!"

"Yeah, now outta that bush. If it's my destiny to teach you how to fly, then you can't stay in there forever." Ash sighed and wriggled out of the concealing foliage and spread her wings, presenting her full oddity for Truthreader to see. Truthreader looked carefully at the wings, then sat back o her hind legs. Then she spread out her own wings, comparing. "Hmm... well, no way to tell if we'll succeed

unless we try!" Ash gawked at her. *What dragon can look at my wings and think there's even a chance that I could ever fly?*

Flightless

"Come on, just flap your wings *reeeally* hard!" Truthreader shouted up to Ash.

After a few painstaking days of learning to climb, Ash had made it all the way up to a Rainwing platform. She had gone home of course, then gone back as soon as possible. Ash's family were far too worried about where Chill was vanishing to each night to possibly notice their smallest and best camouflaged dragonet sneak out. Truthreader's voice snapped her back to the present.

"Come on already! You do want to fly don't you? Just remember my instructions!"

Ash took a deep breath, and jumped. Her wings spread... and immediately flipped inside out from the air pressure.
A/N: this just means that at the top arch her wings go up instead of down from the pressure. I may add a drawing later.

"Aaaaaahhhhhhhhh!" Ash screamed, plummeting like a stone. Somewhere overhead, she saw a black shape diving at her. *Truthreader? No, she's down there. So who's that?*

Strong black talons wrapped around her shoulders, stopping her fall. Ash was lifted upwards, panting in recent terror. Finally, she was set down back on the platform she had jumped from.

"What were you thinking! You could've been killed! Who are you anyways?" The black dragon scolded, examining her wings.

"Errr.... I'm Ash, and I was thinking Truthreader told me to..." Ash tried. At the same moment, Truthreader landed beside the two dragons.

"Of course she did. Truthreader! You idiot, what did I tell you about *thinking* before you act?" The NightWing berated her.

Truthreader growled and smacked the Nightwing with her tail. "Nightseeker, she's *fine*. I would've caught her if you hadn't." Nightseeker gave a snort of disbelief, then the siblings made a tent with their wings and started whispering. They broke apart a minute later, with Truthreader growling fairly loudly.

"I said ok! I said it about a dozen times! Just go away!"

Nightseeker huffed, and flew off, but not before one more remark. "You did, but I still wish I had your power." Truthreader made the fire-hissing sound at Nightseeker who growled what sounded like: "Fine fine, I'm going already." Before taking off.

"Sorry about my brother. He can be a bit annoying." Truthreader apologised. Ash didn't think he'd been too annoying, in fact, she found it kinda honourable that he had not slapped his sister back. That was quite the opposite of what her own siblings would do.

"Eh, He wasn't *that* bad. So, anyways whatcha wanna do?" Ash responded, knowing from experience that it would be impossible to convince her that her brother was nice.

"Huh. I don't really know. I've never had a friend before. Most of them freak out when they realise I don't have normal powers." Truthreader admitted.

"Well, me neither, so let me think for a minute." Ash sat back on her hind legs and wore a thoughtful expression for a few minutes. Finally, her face lit up and she jumped to her feet. She heard a small rustle, but figured it was her talons shaking the branch.

"I have. The. Best. Idea!" She squealed. Truthreader leaned forward with interest. "We should make a detective agency!" Truthreader tilted her head with a trace of confusion, as though she was wondering what Ash meant. "Think about it," Ash continued. "Between your.. uhhh... being a lie detector, and my love for mystery scrolls, we could make a great team." Truthreader brightened.

"Your right, I know a cave that's in between the NightWing and Rainwing villages that would be perfect. And maybe we could build

an entrance!" Truthreader suggested, tail flicking in excitement.

"Yeah, and have a door so it's kinda mysterious. Cmon, what are we waiting for? Let's go!" Ash chirped as she started to clamber down the tree. Truthreader swooped down quickly after her, and the two new friends dashed off into the forest together.

A/N
For anyone wondering why this part was gone all day or why the wording is different from yesterday, I accidentally deleted the part and had to rewrite it.

Looks like someone has a crush

Nightseeker snuck a peek over his shoulder at his sister and the little hybrid. It was the hybrid- Ash that interested him though. *How does she live without flying? Has she ever been able to fly? Will she? Is she the dragonet in my vision? Are we destined to be friends...? Or maybe... more then friends?* He internally slapped himself for the thought. He had just met this dragon, and it barely counted as a meeting. *Why am I even thinking about this? I should be concentrating on my studies. Studies.... studies.... I wonder what she's a hybrid of? Maybe I've heard of her parents. That had to be in the scrolls somewhere. I mean, she appears to be part Skywing, but the Skywings rarely let hybrids live, so-*

A tree branch smacked him in the face. Nightseeker grabbed onto it with both talons and perched. He realised realised he'd been staring for a little too long. Ok a lot to long. But she was so interesting. He just wanted to go back there and ask her everything about herself. But he knew he'd end up staring. How did he know? He knew from the fact that despite flying straight into a tree, he still had his head turned so he could watch her. *Ash. That's a cool name. I wonder if she's a Tribrid. I've never seen a dragon without a back ridge before. Maybe she was born early? Before they had a chance to grow in?* Ash had started leaning on her talon, a thoughtful expression on her face that Nightseeker found just a little too cute. Suddenly, she jumped up, and Nightseeker jumped too, rustling the branch. He ducked down quickly, but Ash didn't seem to notice. Truthreader didn't notice either. The two chattered excitedly for a few moments, then Ash climbed down to the forest floor. Nightseeker finally managed to tear his gaze away, and immediately took off, soaring back home.

He managed to look forward the whole way back to his family's treehouse, then immediately grabbed some paper and a quill. He dashed off to his room, leaving a startled Fatespeaker watching him go.

When Nightseeker got to his room, he conjured up the image of Ash, and started to draw her. He had to start over a few times, but finally got one that at least captured all her main features, if not quite counting as good artwork. Then he got out his scrolls on the dragons of Pyrrhia.

Those bits of orange-red definitely *mean Skywing. I wonder what it's like being a Skywing who can't fly. Must be hard. How does she hunt? All dragons fly to hunt except Seawings, but- concentrate. The brown could be Mudwing, but it also could just be Skywing orange mixed with NightWing black. But her horns don't look Nightwing, so she* must *be a Mudwing. Now to check the list of documented hybrids and their parents.*

Nightseeker grabbed a scroll, and ran his talon down the page, looking for Mud/Sky hybrids. A loud laugh startled him, and he looked up to see Truthreader holding his drawing of Ash. She was smirking slyly.

"Well, well, well." She drawled, pitting down the scroll. "Looks like someone has a crush on my new best friend."

"What me? No, no, no, no, I uhh... I just umm.... I find he- hybrids very interesting. That's all." Nightseeker stuttered. Truthreader flicked him with her tail.

"Ah ah ah, you know I can tell when your lying. Although, it wouldn't take a mind reader to figure that out."

Shit. Nightseeker has managed to forget about the fact that his sister was a dragon lie detector. Literally. He sighed, defeated.

"Ok *fine* I may like her a little bit." Truthreader smirked and shook the drawing in his face.

"Oh, just a *little* bit? Well then you shouldn't mind if I go show her this, hmm?" Truthreader teased.

"Fine. I like her a lot. I can't stop thinking about her. And if you mention *anything* I will feed you to that snapping turtles in your sleep." He threatened. Truthreader grinned and hugged him. Then

she leaned a little closer, and whispered something in his ear.

"Aww, my lil brother has his first crush. How cute." Then she jumped up and ran away laughing.

"TRUTHREADER! We're twins you seagull brain!" Nightseeker roared, chasing after her.

Tidal

On a large windswept beach, a family of Seawings were eating lunch.

"Squid again! I know you think it's funny Tsunami, but it's getting old." Riptide complained. Tsunami peeled her squid apart, looked Riptide right in the eye, and threw the squid's brain at him. Riptide glared at Tsunami, then slowly picked up a salmon and speared it on one of Tsunami's horns.

"FOOD FIGHT!" The twins shouted, throwing decapitated fish at each other.

Soon the whole family was laughing on the beach, their meal forgotten. Tidal watched his parents throw insults and fish, side by side with his sister.

"Hey mom?" He asked suddenly, feeling a pang of hunger and realising the picnic was now practically inedible.

Tsunami be her head to face him, a squid tentacle hanging from her ear. "Yeah Tidal?"

"Can I go get some food, I'm hungry." He requested hopefully. His mother had a confused look on her face.

"Why don't you just eat-" she broke off as she realised that most of the meal was stuck to her or Riptide. "Oh, ok then, just remember the rules: don't-"

Tidal cut her off. "Don't interact with anyone, don't reveal where we live, only eat onshore, don't let anyone see me, and don't flash my scales. I know." He listed while walking into the sea. Tsunami rolled her eyes.

"Yeesh, does anyone in this family wanna let me finish a sentence?" She complained, but before she could lecture him, Tidal had dove

beneath the waves. As the cool salty water enveloped him, Tidal felt free. Sure it was a bit harder to move underwater, but the peace and beauty of the ocean overwhelmed any sense of discomfort for Tidal. He immediately shifted into a current, one that took him straight to a small reef.

When he reached the reef, he twisted his wings so he twirled sideways out of the current. Landing on a chunk of coral, he looked around. And noticed the purple Seawing staring at him.

Kraken

[image]

Tidal yelped, a startled stream of bubbles escaping his jaws. The other dragon looked startled too, but held her ground.

"Who are you?" She flashed.

"Who are you*?"* He flashed back fiercely, making the dragon squint. She growled, bubbles spilling from her mouth, and swam up, still underwater, as though she was hovering. Tidal swam up to, and the two circled each other for a while. Finally, the purple Seawing responded.

"I asked first. And besides, it's none of your business who I am." At this point, Tidal really wanted to know. She landed on an outcropping of coral a few feet away from the rest. Tidal stayed swimming, not wanting to be below her, or beside her.

"You will tell me, or I'll make you!" He flashed menacingly. Of course, he didn't really have much of an idea of how he would make her. Maybe if he sat on her for long enough...

The purple dragon got into a fighting crouch. "*Try me."* She flashed. Tidal grinned, and they both flashed all their scales, the signal that either meant "help" or "do not interrupt, there is a battle going on here."

Tidal lunged forward at her, a grin spread across his face. He had battle training since he could walk. He needed it, there were always Seawing guards looking for and attacking the family. What surprised him however, was the fact that this dragon was a good fighter too. She met his attack with a head butt to the stomach, leaving his too winded to defend against her claws. She got a few good scratches in before he caught his breath enough to punch her in the face. She spun away, and he tackled her with trained expertise. The purple Seawing didn't struggle. Either she was too tired, or smart enough to know that this hold was practically

impossible to escape.

"Tell me who you are, and what you're doing here." He flashed. The purple dragon turned to him with a fierce look in her eyes and glared. Then she flashed something.

"I'll tell you, if you tell me first." She flashed. Tidal rolled his eyes.

"You tell me, then I'll tell you." He comprised.

"Fine. I'm Kraken. I'm eight. My mother is the council chief of war, and my father is dead. Now who are you?"

Three moons, what have I gotten myself into? The dragonet of Coral's war chief? And now I have to tell her who I am? She might get my whole family killed. Tidal worried. The anguished must have shown on his face, because Kraken flashed something else at him.

"What's wrong? It's not like telling me who you are is gonna kill you."

Tidal blew out a stream of bubbles in a sigh. *"It might. I can only tell you who I am if you promise never to tell anyone, especially your mother."* Kraken looked fairly shocked at this revelation, but not as shocked as she would look in a minute. *"Promise?"* Tidal asked.

"Yeah yeah, can you tell me now?" Kraken rolled her eyes. Tidal shook his head.

"I'm serious. You need to promise."

"Fine, fine. Cross my heart and hope to die, stick a seashell in my eye, I promise I won't tell anyone who you are. Why do I need to promise anyway? Your acting like your Riptide's son or something with how mysterious you're being." Tidal struggled not to wince. He had never come that close to someone guessing his identity before. He gulped, then finally answered.

"That's because I am." He flashed. The look on Kraken's face clearly read "What the hell." Tidal would have laughed his head off had he not been terrified of what she would do next.

"So.. so you're the dragonet that the entire Kingdom has been hunting...?

for five years...?" Kraken flashed uncertainly, looking uncomfortable and shocked at the same time.

"You can't tell anyone, they'll murder my whole family, just because Queen Coral doesn't like my grandfather." Surprisingly, Kraken actually listened. Or, watched, I guess. Tidal was never quite sure about the proper terminology for speaking versus Aquatic, since his mother could hardly speak it. Tidal watched Kraken's expression change from shocked, to thoughtful, to sad, to angry, finally landing on decisive.

"Ok." She flashed so suddenly that Tidal almost missed it. *"Ok. I won't tell anyone about you, on one condition."*

"And what would that be?" Tidal flashed, nervousness twisting in his stomach. What if the condition was something awful?

"That we can come here and meet again. I don't think the stories I've heard about your family are entirely unbiased. Besides, I want to show you that not all the dragons who live at the deep palace act like boring seagull-breathed whales who have one of Coral's scrolls stuck up their asses." Kraken joked, causing a huge cloud of laugh-bubbles to go up around Tidal's snout. *"Actually, I'm pretty sure some of them* do *have scrolls up their asses, they act so grumpy all the time. Or at least, half the ones on Her Royal Majesty's council do."* It seemed like a simple joke, but.. there was a small glint of hidden rage in her eyes when she mentioned the Queen. Like it was personal for her. Like deep down, she envied anyone who didn't have to hide their feelings about Coral. *Maybe that's on her list of reasons of why she wants to know me. Because she's jealous? Well,* he thought. *Nothing to be jealous of.*

Little did he know, the reason for her dislike of the Queen ran deeper. Much, much deeper.

A/N

I hope you like my drawing. I worked really hard on it. I have more drawings, but I need to colour them in with my computer's art program. So, how do you like Kraken? I think she might be the first Oc in this book that I made before I had the idea of a fan fiction. I picked her mother to be Piranha

because Piranha is the closest living dragon to Kraken's colour, and I wanted her to have a high rank without actually being related to Tidal. Not because I think Piranha is a motherly character LOL.

Happy hatching day

[image]

A/N
I am so so so so so so sorry for not updating in so long. I had a bit of writers block and bit more of laziness.

Anyways, onto the story.

A few months later.

Viper crouched behind a dune, awaiting the pinkish white dragonet, her secret crush. When Chill landed, he looked around expectantly. When he didn't immediately see Viper, he sat down with a disappointed expression. It was almost enough to make Viper leave her hiding spot, but not yet, she reminded herself. *Today is special.* Making the least sound physically possible, Viper every so slowly crept around the edge of the dune, so that she was standing just behind Chill. It was a bit harder with all the jewellery that she was wearing. Well, it felt like a lot to her, but in reality she was only wearing a few ruby bracelets, swiped from her mother's jewellery box, to cover her missing scales. In the pouch around her neck was where those scales had gone. Or rather, what those scales had turned into. It had taken about two months of chemistry training with Firefly, but eventually they had found a chemical reaction that made a Sandwing scale radiate heat even off the body. And another one that could melt scales into particular shapes. For that, they had to mix Rainwing venom with just the right things. And then, they had gone to a jeweller and made some of Viper's scales into a necklace. A special necklace. One that would radiate enough heat onto Chill's scales to keep him warm at night, and not close to death in winter. Viper silently raised her wings until they were just out of Chill's peripheral vision, then pounced on him. Chill yelped in surprise and twisted around. Viper gave him a sly glance, then a small kiss on the forehead. Chill looked even more startled now.

"Happy hatching day!" Viper announced, removing her tackle grip from Chill's wings. "Thought I'd forget did ya?"

Chill furrowed his brow, confused. Slowly, he spoke. "When... when did I tell you when my hatching day was?" Viper gave him her best mock-mysterious face.

"I have my ways..." Ways meaning that she had found out from Firefly that Clay's daughter had started a detective agency with Starflight's daughter, which Firefly has found out from Glory, who had found out from Petal. Apparently, Petal had misplaced a flower necklace of hers. Queen Glory's sloth had eaten it, and Glory had caught Petal scolding the sloth. Petal had mentioned the location and that one of the investigators was "This weirdo red and brown dragonet with flightless wings." Since Queen Glory still exchanged letters with Clay, she knew of Ash's wing predicament, and brought it up one night at dinner. Firefly and Viper had tracked Ash down one day and asked for her date of hatching. Ash was naturally confused, but seemed more satisfied then anything once Viper had explained her connection to Chill. Of course, Ash had been sworn to secrecy. If Ash told anyone, it might make it back to Sunny about her daughter's secret meetings with the dragonet of her ex friend.

Viper shuddered slightly. *That would* not *be a pretty picture.* Chill still seemed suspicious, so Viper decided a distraction would be best. She grabbed his talon and pulled him into the air.

"Woah, where are we going?" He yelped as he tried to regain his balance, only to be pulled off it again by Viper dragging him through the sky.

"Where have you always wanted to go?" She asked right back.

"Err... maybe the Sky Kingdom? I've only been there once, but I've heard it has great views. Or the Rainforest. Isn't there real mud there? But it doesn't matter anyway, I couldn't stay anywhere past sunset. I mean, unless you were with me, but then we'd have to either stop a lot or wait til morning to go back." Chill replied cautiously. The look on Viper's face made him nervous. "Why...?"

"I think Sky Kingdom is better. Less crowded, and less chance of being watched by camouflaged dragons." Viper resolved, pulling Chill higher. At this point, she was basically dragging him through the air.

A few minutes later, Chill had finally managed to catch up with Viper.

"Where... are.... we goi... going?" He wheezed between pants and gasps. They were flying as close to maximum Skywing speed as regular dragons could get. Chill, being half Skywing should have had no trouble, but he resembled a Mudwing in all but colouration, and he was flapping about trying to balance and losing energy with tons of questions.

"Sky Kingdom." Viper stated quickly, not wanting to get winded from combining the ridiculous speeds, enormous height, and talking to much.

Finally, after flying for two more hours at breakneck speed, Viper finally faltered in the air and chose a nice mountain peak to land on. There was the slightest dusting of snow, and Viper beckoned Chill down beside her.

"V-Viper, we c-an't stay up this-s high, it-t's too c-c-cold." Chill tried to say through chattering teeth. Viper gave him a sly grin and wrapped her wings around him. After a minute, the heat emanating from Viper melted the snow beneath Chill's talons and he stopped shivering. Viper wrapped her arms and tail around his, and Chill started to feel warm enough. "Viper... why are we here? You know we have reasons not to stay here past dark, and it's almost sunset."

"Don't worry bout it, Firefly is covering for me. According to my mother, I'm having a sleepover with Firefly, and according to the RainWings, I'm out camping in a non specified area. Firefly's there on her own, but using her shifting scales to make it look like I'm there." Viper explained. "Now shut up, stop worrying and watch the sunset." She hissed playfully, moving her wing to turn Chill's head.

The sunset was truly beautiful, oranges and yellows spilling upwards to suck the blueness of the sky away. The clouds slowly infused with orange, then masqueraded as purple by mixing with the pale blue sky. The sun was a large yellow orb, crawling down the fire painted sky. The yellow was slowly swallowed up by the horizon, fading into what looked like dark red dust-clouds.

Chill looked behind him, and promptly decided that Viper's face, with oranges and reds reflected off it, was the most beautiful thing that could be seen from this mountaintop.

The mountain wind seemed to carve a path around the two dragons, keeping them warm in the sun's dying heat. Suddenly, Viper looked away from the sky and met Chill's eyes. She gave him one of her signature grins, and pulled a gold necklace out of her pouch. Still grinning, she slipped it over Chill's head. Chill looked down surprised as a warm pendant thudded onto his chest. He glanced between the necklace and Viper, a slow smile spreading across his snout.

"Like it?" She chirped cheerfully.

"What is it?" Chill asked cautiously. He had never had any treasure before, either the metal made him too cold to wear it, or Scorch ruined it the second it was left within her reach. Which, to be honest was anywhere, save for in Chill's bed, but he had never been able to keep cold metal near him at night.

Viper was giving him a sly look. "Oh it's nothing.... only a necklace that's made of my scales and will radiate heat." She said, so calmly that Chill thought he was imagining the last part. Until Viper pulled the ruby bracelets up slightly to reveal the missing scales on her arm.

Chill gaped. "I- you- What- How did you- when- really? Thank you!" Chill stuttered, trying- and failing to form the confusion flapping around his head into words. Finally he simply gave up and wrapped Viper into a tight hug. "You're the best." He finally whispered.

"I know." She teased back.

Grounded

Viper did a joyous flip in the sky as she neared the place she was supposed to be camping. She walked in, only to find Sunny glaring daggers at her. She froze, taking in the scene before her. Firefly was black fading into purple so dark that only Viper could tell the difference. Guilt. That's the colour of guilt. But Firefly wouldn't tell on me, unless... unless mother found out something on her own. Viper glanced around. Shit. It must've been the stupid bracelets. I knew I should've kept with the vine ones, but I wanted to look like a Princess instead of a dragon who just flew through several bushes. Fuck, fuck, fuck I'm so stupid! Viper suddenly noticed Firefly's tail shifting colour's ever so slightly. Aquatic. Viper recognised instantly. Firefly used a quick combination of flashes and twitches and expressions to send a message so quickly, Viper nearly missed it.

I'm sorry. Play along. Cover story.

Viper gave Firefly a slow blink, the equivalent to a nod when they were trying to communicate without anyone noticing at all.
TorrywgtgrjmhgllmcvmjYoyto
Finally, Viper met her mother's scorching gaze. Smoke was rising from her nose and when she finally spoke, her growl was so loud that both Firefly and Viper shrank back.

"Where. Were. You." She demanded dangerously, annunciating each syllable so that it was impossible to mistake her words.

"Errr....." Viper glanced to Firefly for hell, and she quickly tapped her claws gently, spelling the correct answer put in shift.

Hunting.

"Hunting." Viper blurted quickly. Sunny narrowed her eyes.

"Where's your prey then?" She challenged. "And why the hell did you find it necessary to steal the bracelets I was going wear to the

ball my Mother hosted tonight? You know, the one that's actually a disguised political meeting with the Mudwing royal family over trading routes?" Sunny demanded. Viper really really really wanted to take a step back, and fly the hell away, but she knew that Sunny would catch up eventually, and then there would be no chance of getting out of this.

Viper bit her lip (I know they probably don't have lips but shhhhhhhhh) nervously. She knew she couldn't tell her mother about Chill, she would never be allowed to see him again. But... maybe... maybe if she found a convincing enough lie. Viper looked up from her talons suddenly. *I've got it!*

"I'm waiting." He mother growled impatiently.

It wasn't her best idea, but it was the only smart choice. "Well..." Viper started slowly, trying to perfect the phrasing of her sentence. "Firefly and I.... we wanted to have a party. So, I ummm... I stole some of your jewellery to wear, and I was going hunting so we could have party food... umm... yeah..."

Sunny fumed. "All this for a party!?! That's it. You two." She whipped her head around, gesturing at Firefly to follow her, then at Viper. "Come on. We're going to the Rainforest. Queen Glory is going to help me decide your punishment."

Viper and Firefly exchanged a nervous glance. *Crap. If there was any chance of getting out of this before, there isn't now.*

...

"WHAT!?" Viper yelped. "*You* are sending *me* to Jade Mountain??? This was Glory's idea, right?" Sunny glared.

"Oh, so you don't think I'm capable of coming up with a punishment?"

"Err... no- I mean yes- I mean... I just can't believe you would actually let me out of your sight." Viper stammered.

Her mother frowned. "Well, I mean, Firefly is coming to, and I'm sending a wing of guards to escort you. Also, I'll go back to teaching

there for half of the year. So, no, I'm not really letting you out of my sight." Viper groaned.

"Moooooom! I don't need a wing of guards! I don't even need a single guard. Me and Firefly can take anything that life throws at us. Well, me, Firefly and a couple of daggers."

"That's the other thing. I'm confiscating all your weapons." Sunny announced. Viper looked into Sunny's eyes, thinking she was kidding, but saw no signs of a joke. The corners of Viper's mouth slowly twitched upwards. Then she fell on the floor, laughing like a hyena.

"Good... luck..... with.... that.... one!" Viper gasped between raucous laughter. "What the hell do you think the point of Weapocaching was? I have several hundred weapons out in the desert, and about fifty secret compartments inside the stronghold. You'd be surprised how many of Burn's weapons nobody ever found. It was like she was getting ready for an invasion- oh wait, she was." Sunny's jaw hung open.

"....Hundreds?...." She asked with wide eyes. Viper nodded. "Ok then.... I won't take all your weapons. I'll just not let you bring any to school. There is actually a no weapons rule there."

"Aww. Fine. When do I have to leave?"

"Well, since I'm a founder, your attendance form can be sent by... I'd say in three days at the latest. But until then you are very, very, very grounded. Like, I'm putting a guard outside your door and I'll personally bring you all your meals."

Viper groaned again. "Moooooom! Seriously? All this over a dumb bracelet?"

"This incident has proven to me that you need something to occupy your time with, and I don't want you getting into any more trouble." Viper glowered.

"Can Firefly visit until we leave at least?" Sunny shook her head.

...

Viper sulked the entire flight home. When she got to her room, she saw that a guard had already been posted. Viper collapsed onto her bed and yanked up the covers.

"Promise me you'll stay right here, ok?" Sunny asked as she pulled the blankets off Viper's face.

"Fine. I promise." Viper lied. Under the covers, her talons were crossed. Sunny nodded and walked out of the room with a bit of bounce in her step, revealing a bit of what she must've been like before Viper's dad had died.

As Viper watched the door close, there was only one thought in her mind. *Yeah right I'll stay here. Now where did I put that cement remover....*

Goodbye, Hello

Viper ever so carefully scraped away the last bit of cement on the bricks under her bed. Now, she just had to wait until dinner, eat, and escape. *This should be pretty easy.* Viper flopped dramatically onto her bed and faked a sigh of boredom. It was all for the sake of the guards, just as the "learning" how to whistle (Chill had taught her ages ago) and the game of "darts" had been (it was actually practicing with her throwing knives). By the strategic sounds she had been making, her hope was that the guards thought she was bored out of her skull and had been trying to find something to do for hours. Viper pulled the blankets over her head, to conceal the dark grey cement dust on her scales. She lay down and pretended to be sound asleep. Within a few minutes, a server knocked at the door and slowly opened it.

"Err... your food Princess." The server announced, bowing. Viper made a muffled grunt and yawned, pretending to have been woken up. The server quickly stepped back out of the room, closing the door behind him. Viper surveyed the food quickly.

The meal consisted of three mouselike creatures that Smoulder liked and a ground squirrel. Viper ate the mouselike creatures, and packed the ground squirrel into a small pouch. Next, she shoved her bed slightly to get under it, then shoved it back into place from beneath. Viper carefully pressed all her weight onto the set of bricks she had all but demolished, and, as expected, they split apart from the rest and crashed to the dirt floor below. It was one of the harder secret rooms to find because it required destruction of a wing-length of brick to get to. But it did lead to a tunnel out of the stronghold.

Viper winced at the loud crash of the falling bricks making impact. She quickly placed a large wooden statue on the floor below it's shelf. *There, now just wait a minute to see if any guards will come to check out the crash.*

Surprisingly, none did. Viper supposed she must've had a lucky

moment where the guard was eating at the end of the hall, or taking a cat-nap. As quickly as the snake she was named for, Viper slid under the bed and into the tunnel room. It was an old escape route that some minor noble had installed in his daughter's room during the war. Viper had altered it so that the tunnel led both to the courtyard and close to her meeting spot with Chill. Viper flew down the tunnel, doing her best to not make any sound.

Half an hour of twists, turns, loops, and smacking into walls later, Viper burst out of the cave that the tunnel let out into. She started to wipe off the sand and stone dust that had managed to get into her crest, then stopped herself. Who was there to see her, besides Chill? Besides, being covered in dust might make her less recognisable. Viper flicked her wings open and glided low to the ground until she reached the large modified cave that Chill's family resided in. She silently landed by the door and looked in through a crack. There was only one room that could feasibly belong to Chill. It had torches all down the hallway and Viper thought she could see a bit of pink tail at the entrance to his room.

After a few minutes of wiggling her claws and scraping at the peephole, it was big enough to roll a pebble through.

It took a few minutes to get one far enough without bouncing, but she finally managed to hit Chill's tail. Chill shifted his tail out of view, and for a moment Viper was afraid he had stayed asleep. Then a grumpy pink head swung around the corner. Viper quickly shoved more pebbles through the hole. Chill glared suspiciously at them, and opened the door a crack. Viper smirked at him on the other side, and waved a wing. Chill's expression changed instantly from suspicion to excitement. He opened his mouth to speak, but Viper shushed him and gestured for him to follow her.

After they had walked a safe distance, Viper turned around and sighed.

"I gotta tell you something." She started, her tone somber and resigned.

Chill smirked at her. "Well no shit Sherlock. Why else would you be here at..." He paused to look at the moon. "Midnight?"

Viper swatted him playfully. "Shut up. I'm serious." She said, her voice changing back to a sad tone. "I'm going to Jade Mountain."

Chill's mouth dropped open. "But.. What? Jade.... Why? *When?*" He stammered, searching for words.

"My mother caught me last night. She doesn't know about you, but she thinks I've made enough trouble, and I need teachers to watch me. I have two days left."

Chill looked extremely sad at the idea of not seeing her for a year, but then he brightened, having had an idea. "Well, if you can't come to me anymore, I guess I'll just have to come to you. Any idea how to apply for Jade Mountain?"

Viper thought for a moment, then grinned at his idea and nodded. "Yeah."

Oh Nightingale

"Are you-" Nightseeker started, turning to his sister.

"Yes! I'm sure this is a good idea. She likes you too, I swear. Now what I'm not sure about is if your cheesy pickup lines are a good idea, but that's your call, not mine."

"But what if..... oh I'm just so nervous." Nightseeker mumbled.

"Just DO IT already, or I'll tell her for you!" Truthreader threatened. She was getting impatient. Very very impatient. Nightseeker pouted and glared at her, but begrudgingly spread his wings and flew off to go see Ash.

...

Ash lifted her head off her desk at the sound of a dragon knocking on the door. It had been a long, boring day where most of her clients had been dragons who misplaced a favourite bracelet or something dumb like that. There was a vandalism case, but Truthreader had called dibs. She still wasn't back. *Hmm. That's gotta be Nightseeker.* Ash hadn't heard wingbeats, and Nightseeker was the only one who tried to make sure his approach didn't remind her of her wing condition. Wingbeats didn't really affect her that much anymore, but it was the thought that counted. That was one of her favourite things about the nerdy NightWing. His sweet and thoughtful approach to situations. If she could ever convince him to join their agency, he would definitely be good cop in any interrogations. It would be a crime against dragonkind to make him be bad cop. But the two of them interviewing a suspect would be so cute. Mostly the part where Nightseeker would do that adorable confused forehead scrunch when he was trying to remember the questions.

Ash was so caught up in her detective duo fantasy that it took a few moments for her to realise that Nightseeker has come inside. He looked nervous. It was the cutest thing she had seen all day.

"I- Uhh... I have a case for you."

Ash sighed internally, reaching for the question cards that Truthreader had insisted upon making after Ash had come in tired and gotten all the questions wrong. Of course her crush would only come to see her for a case. And of course Truthreader had mixed up the cards again. Oh well, maybe she wanted to try a new order. "Go on." She said grumpily. Ash was too busy mentally yelling at Truthreader to process what Nightseeker said next before replying.

"Someone's stolen my heart."

"K, any suspects?"

"Yeah.... You." Nightseeker said flirtatiously, leaning on her desk. *Wait. Holdup.* What *did he just say?!?!? Does that mean....?*

"Wai- wha- Uhh... I- Me- R-really??" Ash squeaked. *He likes me back. Brain overload. He likes me back. *OMM, OMM, OMM. What. Oh my moons is he flirting with me this is the cutest thing* EVER. *Holy shit I'm gonna die of Nightseeker adorableness before I even get to tell Truthreader.*

"Yes. Ash, I love you. Ever since the day I met you, I haven't been able to get you out of my head. You are beautiful and strong against all odds and can solve any problem that comes at you in the most clever ways possible. You are the smartest dragon I've ever met. Not in the way that I am, which takes studying and practice, but in the amazing way where you can find the solution to any problem and figure out something in five minutes that would take a lesser dragon years. I could go on forever and never finish my list of reasons why you are the most amazing dragon in my life... Ash, would you do me the honour of becoming my girlfriend?"

"I.... Uhh.... My moons you are so adorable that my brain is malfunctioning. Ummm... Hell yes? Moons, I love you. You're the best."

At this, Nightseeker, who had been nervously staring at his talons, looked up. "So... then is it ok if I kiss you?" Ash nodded frantically.

"Always. Well, except in front of my parents, I still haven't told them that I even found the Rainforest tunnel, much less about you and-" Ash was cut off by lips pressed against hers, and Nightseeker's wing wrapped around her back. He had half jumped over her desk to get closer. Ash closed her eyes and kissed back. Suddenly a drop of something cold and wet hit her nose. She pulled back. "Wha- Oh. Nightseeker what's wrong?" Nightseeker was crying.

"I... I'm going to Jade Mountain next week. With Truthreader. We won't be able to see each other for-"

"For two days. I'm going too. I'm just going in five days instead of seven. My brother got us all enrolled." Nightseeker's face lit up, but he was still crying.

"R-really?"

"Yeah." Ash got off her seat and went over to sit on the ground with her boyfriend, who was still crying. From being emotionally drained she guessed. Suddenly Ash remembered a lullaby she had read about in a scroll about Nightwings.

"*🎶Hush now my Nightingale, no need to cry,*
I'll make sure that it all turns out alright🎶"

Nightseeker stared at her in surprise. "H-how do you know that song?" Ash only grinned and continued singing.

"🎶Silence my Nightingale, perch in your tree.
I can teach you how to be free.🎶"

Ash snuggled into the crook of Nightseeker's wing and hugged his neck. He wrapped his other wing around her. She stroked up and down his spine until he stopped crying.

"*🎶Sleep now dear Nightingale, please do not cry, in the morning we will learn how to fly🎶"*

"🎶Rest here My Nightingale, dream a sweet dream.
Don't feel your fear, I'll make it all clear🎶"

"🎶Oh Nightingale, Oh Nightingale. Please do not cry, we can have

another try.
Never fear, for tomorrow, you learn how to fly♫"

_____

* OMM stands for Oh my moons

A/N

My email address changed a few years ago and I don't remember my password for this account. I think I might get locked out of this account soon. If I do, and if I feel motivated to work on this story, I'll repost it under a similar name (I was thinking of using the same name with "revised version" tacked onto the end). The story will be the same, but I'll rewrite some parts that seem out of character and I'll cut out all the children of the Jade winglet because they weren't actually part of the plot to begin with, and the story is a bit unwieldy with so many characters. There's a chance I might not get locked out of my account, but I wanted to warn you guys now in case it happened. Even if I manage to recover my password I might still rewrite this story because, well I'm 47 chapters in and still haven't gotten all the characters into one place, so there's clearly a bit of a problem. If you guys have any suggestions on how to change my password without knowing the current password or having access to the email I signed up with, please tell me. It would be much more convenient to not have to rewrite this story on a new account. I hope you like this chapter, I'm not particularly confident about how Nightseeker and Ash got together. I hope it didn't feel too rushed.